SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL QSL'ING

BY

GERRY L. DEXTER

The Complete Guide To Reception Reports and QSL Collecting

FOREWORD BY

IAN Mc FARLAND

RADIO CANADA INTERNATIONAL

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Ian Mc Farland
Radio Canada International

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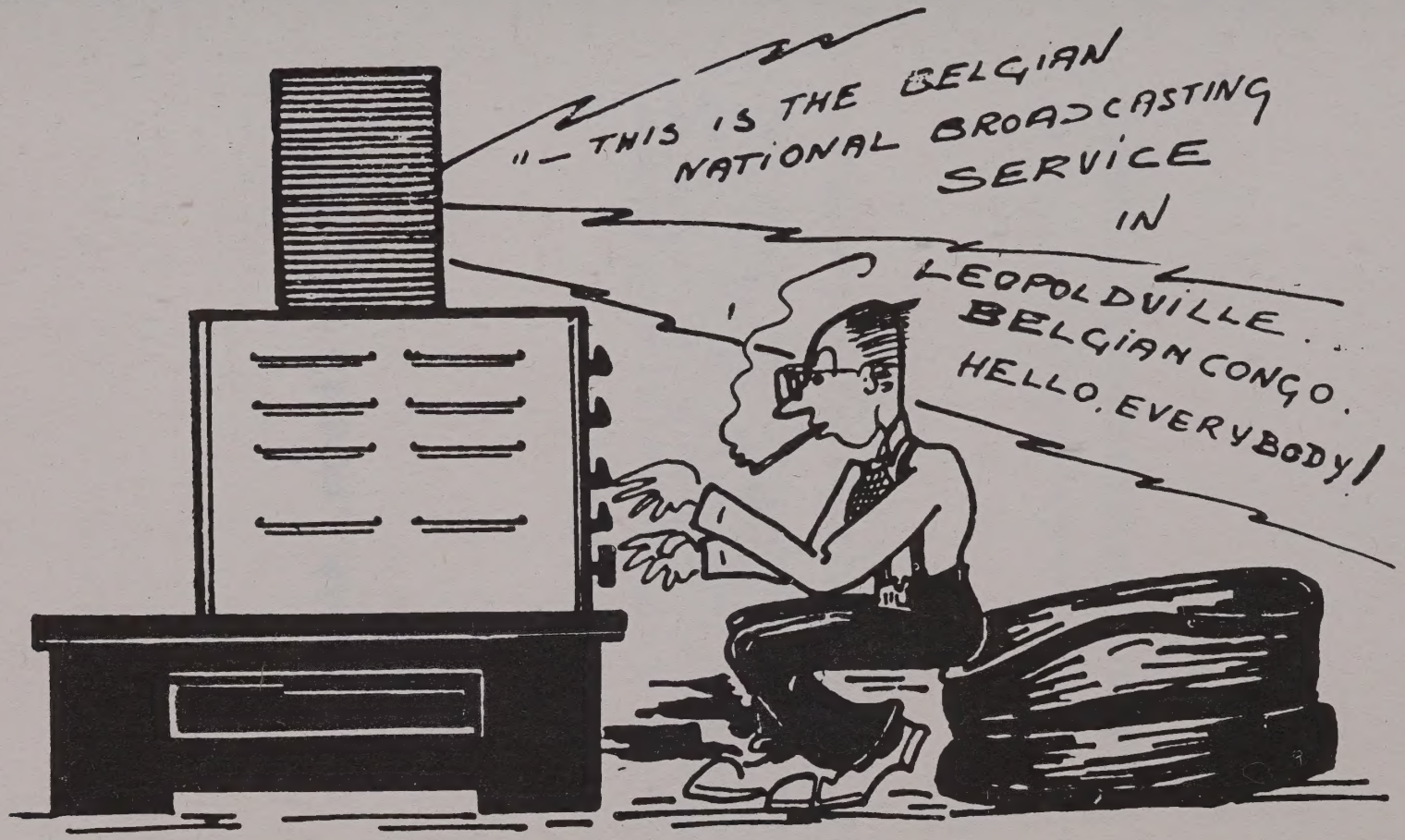
It's for Sharon. Always.

LA VOIX DE LA CONCORDE - DE VRIENDSCHAPSBODE



BELGIE SPREEKT TOT DE WERELD · LA BELGIQUE PARLE AU MONDE

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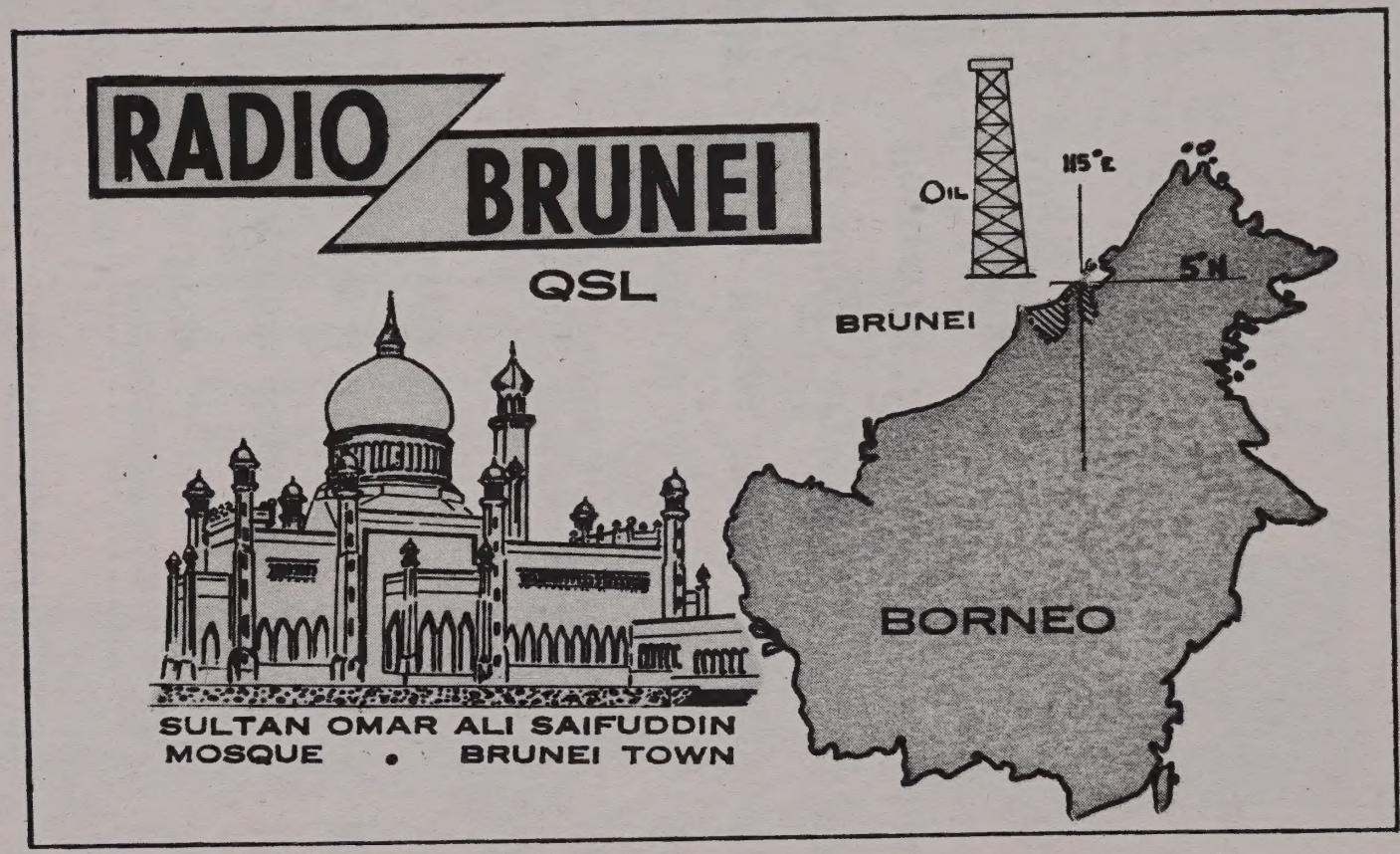

RADIO BRUNEI
QSL
OIL
115°E
5°N
BRUNEI
BORNEO
SULTAN OMAR ALI SAIFUDDIN
MOSQUE • BRUNEI TOWN

FOREWORD

by Ian Mc Farland
Radio Canada International

I suppose you could call the collecting of QSL cards one of the minor controversies of the radio listening hobby. There are those listeners who have no interest in QSLs and argue that they know when they've picked up a bit of rare DX, and that's all that matters. They don't feel they need any proof of the fact from some outside source, even if that source happens to be the radio station in question.

I must confess to being a bit of a fence sitter on this matter of QSLs, albeit with a tilt to one side. To each his own I say. The proof aspect of QSLs aside though, looking through a collection of old QSL cards— as I did when Gerry Dexter asked me to write the foreword to his book— certainly can spark some interesting and enjoyable memories of DX catches of the past, when band congestion wasn't causing chaos for broadcasters and listeners alike, and jamming wasn't rendering half of the high frequency channels unusable.

DX'ing for me dates back to the early fifties, which is also when Gerry's interest in shortwave started to bloom. My "state-of-the-art" equipment consisted of an old Philco console model, minus the wood cabinet. The dial had all the accuracy of a snub-

nosed 38 at 500 yards. It did drag in the signals reasonably well though, and kept me awake many a night until the early hours of the morning. The main DX magnet for me in those early days was the ham bands. To this day I am still amazed that so many of the hams to whom I sent reception reports were sporting enough to QSL the report of a humble young SWL.

The pride and joy of the Mc Farland QSL card collection, which is by no means extensive, is one from an Australian ham who was running a ten watt home brew rig on AM. Back in the fifties, of course, single sideband wasn't a way of life on the ham bands as it is today, and it was possible to DX the weak stuff with a beat up old clunker. When most hams switched over to SSB it took all the fun out of that particular kind of DX'ing. At least it did for me, and I never did go back to DX'ing the ham bands.

Back in the good old days before spiraling postal rates, when one could buy a couple of IRCs without having to make an extra trip to the bank, QSLs were a reasonably cost effective and picturesque alternative to wallpaper for the listening post. These days however, you can get some pretty posh wallpaper for what it would cost to cover a wall with QSL cards.

The practical solution to avoiding bankruptcy in the pursuit of QSLs, is to make sure that you know what you're doing and that you are doing it correctly, before you send off that first reception report. That's where the wealth of good advice and expertise contained in the pages of this book by Gerry Dexter can be worth its weight in IRCs. Anyone can give advice, but it's the expert advice of journalists of Gerry's calibre that SWLs all over the world have come to trust for years. His credentials in the radio listening hobby have been well established over more than three decades of active listening, reporting, SWL club activities and radio journalism.

Having been on the receiving end of countless reception reports from listeners in all parts of the world over the last

twenty years or so, I can vouch for the fact that there's still room for improvement in the quality of many of the reports that show up at Radio Canada International. Unless you happen to be an expert where reception reports are concerned it's pretty well guaranteed that you will learn about some new wrinkles in this book, wrinkles which will improve your reception report/QSL ratio.

I know that Gerry Dexter is the author of this book and that he's supposed to be the one handing out the good advice. But perhaps I might be allowed the privilege of passing on one morsel from the broadcasters' side of the shortwave fence. The secret word here is diplomacy. The diplomatic approach will always work the best, especially in the case of a follow-up report to a station which is slow to respond or which appears to be ignoring you completely. Hurling all manner of insults at the station staff for having the temerity to ignore your first reception report, while forgetting the possiblity that your letter may have gone astray in the mail, is an approach which is designed to provide an immediate increase in the station's wastepaper output. Perhaps you'll get your QSL eventually, but via the Yak Express through Outer Mongolia.

The history of QSLs is a long and colorful one, and dates back to before the first AM stations as we know them today. And it's the wise SWL and DX'er who recognizes it as the privilege that it has always been, rather than a right which it never was.

Good listening, good DX'ing, and good reading too!

Ian Mc Farland, host
SWL Digest
Radio Canada International
Montreal, Canada

FIJI BROADCASTING COMMISSION

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your report on the reception of station VRH-4 3980 1/2KW *on* 26th July 1956

We have pleasure in advising that your report is confirmed.

We regret that there is not sufficient information to allow us to confirm the report.

K. [illegible]
Manager.

Broadcasting House,
Suva.

BC-30
30 FBC24 54—500

X

RADIO BRUNEI

Brunei 19th. April, *19* 71

Dear Sir,

Your reception report on our transmission on 7215 MHz *Kc/s on* 4th April, *19* 71 *is hereby acknowledged and confirmed.*

Yours faithfully

Chief Engineer

STAMP

Mr. Gerry L.Dexter,
Rt.1, Maple Road,
Lake Geneva,
Wisconsin, 53147,
UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA.

IX

INTRODUCTION

There is something intrinsic in the hobby of monitoring the electronic airwaves which makes those who pursue this activity prone to be collectors of one sort or another. It doesn't matter if one is involved in tuning the shortwave broadcasting bands, utility station communications, amateur radio operators, DX'ing the AM broadcasting band, the FM band, long distance television or VHF/UHF radio. The instinct is there to, at the very least, keep a list of the signals which have been received and thus, in a sense "collect" stations. Most monitoring hobbyists at least collect information so as to be better equipped to pick up the rare stations.

For a great many listeners and DX'ers the urge to collect expands into the area of QSL'ing - sending reports of reception to stations in the hope of receiving a card or letter in reply to confirm that reception. Some carry the collecting fever into the accumulation of radio souveniers and memorabilia - from bumper stickers to ballpoint pens to pennants and t-shirts.

The practice of sending reception reports and QSL'ing stations has become something of an art form over the years. While it is true that many stations can be verified with a minimal effort on the part of the listener, the number of stations which require extra effort is growing steadily. There are far more stations around the world with which the DX'er stands a less

than fifty-fifty chance of receiving a reply on the first attempt than there are first time sure bets.

Until now the subject of writing reception reports, with all of the associated techniques from the prepared card to how to store your collection, has been treated only in an occasional book chapter or magazine article within the hobby press.

This is the first book devoted entirely to a thorough treatment of how-to-do-it. The need for such a book has become more and more apparent as success in collecting verifications becomes more and more elusive. And, as more and more people enter the hobby there are clear signs that the quality of reports being sent to radio stations is spiraling down from its former level, which wasn't so very high in the first place.

In our discussion the terms "QSL," "verification," "verie," and "confirmation" will be used interchangably. They all mean the same thing, though perhaps different things to different people at different times.

DX'er Giacomo (Jack) Perolo of Brazil tells a wonderful story about the time he was on vacation in Bolivia and paid a visit to a small broadcaster there. Jack spent some time with the manager of the station and, midway through the visit, inquired about the location of the men's room. He was directed to a small cubbyhole off a basement hallway, the only available light a bare bulb hanging some distance away from Jack's destination.

Finding himself in near total darkness Jack explored his surroundings and his hand encountered a sheaf of papers hanging on a nail. Since it wasn't the usual paper roll one would expect to find Jack tore off a couple of the sheets and brought them into the light to find out what they were. You guessed it! They were reception reports, and the intended use was all too obvious!

Reception reports aren't looked upon with quite that amount of derision at most stations, but the story does make you wonder

sometimes just what happens to all those reports which are placed into the mail so full of hope, only to vanish into the void, never to produce a reply.

At the other end of that welcome scale are other small broadcasters who painstakingly file away every report, sometimes even placing them in scrapbooks. There are stations with bulletin boards, even entire walls full of picture postcards and photos sent by listeners with their reports. Everything is saved, but nothing is answered!

Unfortunately there are no techniques or secrets, there are no special strategies which can guarantee you a verification. But we hope that *SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL QSL'ING* will provide you with some of the basics of reporting if you are unfamiliar with them as well as explaining some more advanced approaches and techniques. Most importantly, we hope the book gives you an insight into the proper attitudes and mental outlooks which are the real key to success in this fascinating and challenging part of the listening and DX'ing hobby.

YVLH
650 KCS
Radio GIRARDOT
MARACAY — ESTADO ARAGUA
V E N E Z U E L A
* LA FRECUENCIA
CON
MAYOR
AUDIENCIA
EMISORA DEL AÑO
GUAICAIPURO DE ORO 1966

BELGIUM
CALLING
THE
WORLD
OTC
THE INTERNATIONAL GOODWILL STATION
IN THE HEART OF AFRICA
LEOPOLDVILLE
IAN

I - THE PRIZE

The average QSL hound must surely feel some empathy with Kasper Gutman, Sidney Greenstreet's character in the Humphrey Bogart movie *The Maltese Falcon.* The "fat man" spent years chasing that very valuable black bird and was willing to go to any lengths, fair or foul, to own the prize.

In the same vein, it is not at all uncommon to meet serious QSL collectors who have equal determination, who have worked for years or even decades to obtain the much wanted reply.

Why is this? What is this strange hold the verification has on so many radio buffs? Why do we spend all the time and a not inconsiderable amount of money to accumulate pieces of paper which have no intrinsic value and no value at all to anyone but the owner?

The lure of the QSL takes many forms. For some it is the feeling that the logging of a radio station is incomplete by itself. The listener somehow doesn't feel quite whole without a verification to go along with the logging.

Others may simply want a tangible reminder of their reception, something to put into an album, to look at in the coming years. For others it is simply the challenge— the chase transferred from radio receiver to postal system. Certainly this side of the chase can frequently be the more difficult. As the saying goes, often as not "hearing them is the easy part."

And the more difficult the reply is to obtain, the more determined the real collector becomes in his quest for an eventual reply. With the victory comes the excitement, the thrill, the high one gets from knocking off a particularly tough one. Such times erase the long, dreary days when the mailbox contains but the mundane leavings of an unfeeling mailman.

There's also a special enjoyment in finding something from a foreign country in the mailbox. You are touched, if only in a small way, by another culture. And there's that expectation just before the mailbox is opened— the soaring hope that today may be the day your reply from Radio Wherever arrives. It can be Christmas on any day of the year! The depths of despair to which a serious collector can sink after weeks without a QSL fix are also part and parcel of the game.

As collectibles verifications are special indeed. You cannot obtain them on a subscription basis from the Franklin Mint or a "QSL of the Month Club." You cannot spend long, lazy Sunday afternoons searching out-of-the-way shops in hopes of finding a rare one. A QSL collection is the result of a single individual's listening and reporting efforts. It is his and his alone, non-transferrable. It cannot be sold one day by your estate for several thousand dollars as if it were a valuable stamp collection. Your verification collection is as unique, as individualized as anything can be. It is safe to say that there are no two collections anywhere in the world which are entirely alike. The collection is priceless to you, worthless to anyone else, aside from its interest value to another DX'er.

In The Beginning

Where did this business of QSL'ing and QSL collecting come from? How did it get started? It's debatable whether anyone really knows for sure. The answer seems lost in the

mists of radio's earliest days. But it seems logical that the first QSLs originated either with the efforts of the first amateur radio operators or the first AM broadcasting stations.

Both were interested in knowing how far they could reach out with their signals. The audience for radio broadcasting was growing (everyone was a DX'er in those days since most people lived some distance from the nearest radio station). The broadcasters often aired announcements asking that listeners write and tell them where they were listening and how well the program was being received. And for the radio stations, answering their mail like good broadcasters should, it was natural to mention that, "yes, you had us." And so, the game was begun. Many of the early broadcasters affixed what were known as "Ekko Verification Stamps" to their letters. The stamps were produced by a commercial firm, were individualized with the station's call letters and looked something like a commemorative postage stamp. An Ekko stamp on your letter served to make the verification official.

An Ekko verification stamp for station KFI in Los Angeles, which was still being used as late as the 1950's.

Ham operators began exchanging cards as a remembrance of their two-way contacts but the cards apparently soon became the

accepted format for proving two-way contacts as well. Then they became essential in qualifying for the various amateur radio award programs. The courtesy aspect sometimes took a back seat.

The term "QSL," incidently, comes from the amateur radio "Q code" which was originally used by morse code operators as a means of saving words during transmissions. It means, literally, "Can you acknowledge receipt?"

It was only natural then, for the custom of sending out QSL cards to spread into other areas as new forms of electronic communications were developed— international broadcasting on shortwave, utility transmissions, FM and TV stations, even Citizens Band radio operators.

Is It? Is It Really?

We have said that a QSL is a verification of reception. But it isn't. Not in the strictest sense anyway. Aside from those QSLs which confirm two-way contracts betwen two stations who know they talked to each other, a QSL must otherwise be considered as something less than actual irrefutable proof of reception.

QSL'ing expert Henry Lazarus, looking at the subject with a lawyer's eye, notes that there is really no way any station can certify beyond all doubt that your reception is correct. There are many means by which a reception report can be faked and stations can and have issued verifications based upon such false reports, never realizing they had been duped.

This unfortunate situation places a responsibility on the listener to be very certain of his logging before sending his reception report. One should not adopt an attitude which places the onus for deciding whether or not one has heard a particular

station on that station itself. Tentative reception reports are an exception to this rule, as we'll discuss later on.

What Is and What Isn't

The QSL itself can take one of three forms, fit into different classifications. There are the "full data" replies, those which include the date, time and frequency of the reported reception. This is the ideal kind of reply and all too frequently not realized. Other QSL's contain only some of the above information and are therefore classified as "partial data" replies. A great many others make no mention of either date, time or frequency and are thus classed as "no data" replies.

For years this variance in the form of reply sent by stations raised questions for the collector as to what should and what shouldn't be counted as a legitimate QSL. Much soul-searching took place both individually and in the hobby print media. A central part of the problem concerned the "no data" replies often sent by Latin American stations. What was worse, these replies might not even include any kind of specific statement verifying the reception but simply thank the writer for his report. The problems raised by this sort of reply were especially dogging.

"They"—those never identified entities who make the really heavy hobby decisions for us—began to believe that things should not be looked at in such a dogmatic fashion. Why not try and view things from the station's standpoint, they wondered. Perhaps a reply which might only thank the reporter for his letter represented a failure on the part of the station to understand what was wanted by the listener. And, recognizing the enormity and uselessness of any worldwide campaign aimed at getting all stations to include a minimal amount of information in their replies, "they" came up with a general rule governing the content of replies: Any response from a station which does not state that

the reporter did not hear the station should be considered as an intent by the station to confirm the report.

These guidelines have some exceptions which should be obvious. Items normally intended for other purposes but sent to the reporter without a QSL card or letter should not be counted as a verification. Such items include pennants, bumper stickers, rate cards, program schedules, Christmas and New Year's cards and so on. What the rule really intends to say, therefore, is that there must be some sort of personalization involved in the reply, other than the envelope in which the material was sent. Usually this personalization is in the form of a letter or card containing, at a minimum, a thank you note, or implied verification statement of some type.

Much of the interpretation of this rule is left to the individual to decide, as are most ethical points relative to the hobby. Unfortunately there are those who abuse the guidelines; who do consider a Christmas card as a QSL— cases of station intent taken too far. But, by and large, the majority of listeners will wait until they can show a card or letter, however vague the message may be, before they check off a station as verified in their logs.

What Are Reports Worth?

There is no question that QSLs are more difficult to obtain today than they were even just a few years ago. Certainly they are more expensive. Worldwide inflation has upped the living and QSL'ing costs for everyone. It has seen the costs of operating a radio station rise and sometimes, as a result of those increased expenses, stations determine to save money, doing some of that cost-cutting in their QSL departments. This may take the form of stopping the practice entirely, limiting verifications to one per year per reporter or providing do-it-

yourself QSLs which one has to request at certain times of the year, fill out and return to the station for authentication.

The value to stations of the average reception report is not what it once was either. The major international broadcasters generally have a pretty good idea of how well they are being received in their various target areas. They manage this through various means including exchange monitoring agreements with the radio monitoring departments of other stations in other countries as well as through their own volunteer monitors who report regularly on reception.

This is not to say, however, that reports from listeners and DX'ers are of no use at all. Often listener reception reports can play an important role, particularly in cases where a station has switched to a new frequency and needs to know whether reception has improved or gotten worse. When a station's signal is suddenly battered by that of another broadcaster who has just moved in on top or to a nearby frequency the station suffering the interference will want to know about that situation. There are times when a listener's report can alert a station to an unstable or poorly modulated transmitter or a transmitter which is putting out spurious signals. New transmitters, new antenna systems, new boradcasting hours, new language and target services are all events about which stations will welcome reports.

Even though we no longer live in a time when reports from Joe or Jane Listener are the sole source of information a station has about its signal strength and readability, most of the major stations are still glad to get reports or, at the least, they put up with them. A good, well prepared reception report which provides useful information to the station will still be generally welcomed by that station's engineering and/or programming staff.

While the international broadcaster may be relying a bit less on the listener for information about reception, the smaller

stations, particularly those which are not on the air to serve an international audience, have less need for any reports at all. Commercial and private broadcasters in Latin America and government broadcasters aiming only at regional coverage have little practical need for your reception report. A small commercial station may use the reports as an aid to selling advertising time, proudly providing them as evidence to the prospective advertiser to show how powerful and far reaching the station's signal is.

The novelty aspect of being heard at a great distance enters the picture in varying degrees for broadcasters. A station just beginning its career may welcome letters in the beginning and then get tired of them after the novelty wears off and the whole thing gets to be old hat. That often means replies become few and far between.

Most, if not all of the international broadcasters, use reception reports to increase their annual mail count figures and thus help justify the money that country's government spends on its international service.

Broadcasters which are on the air chiefly as a tool of their government's propaganda machine generally welcome listener mail and take pains to answer every letter, even though the volume of that mail may run to 100,000 or more every year.

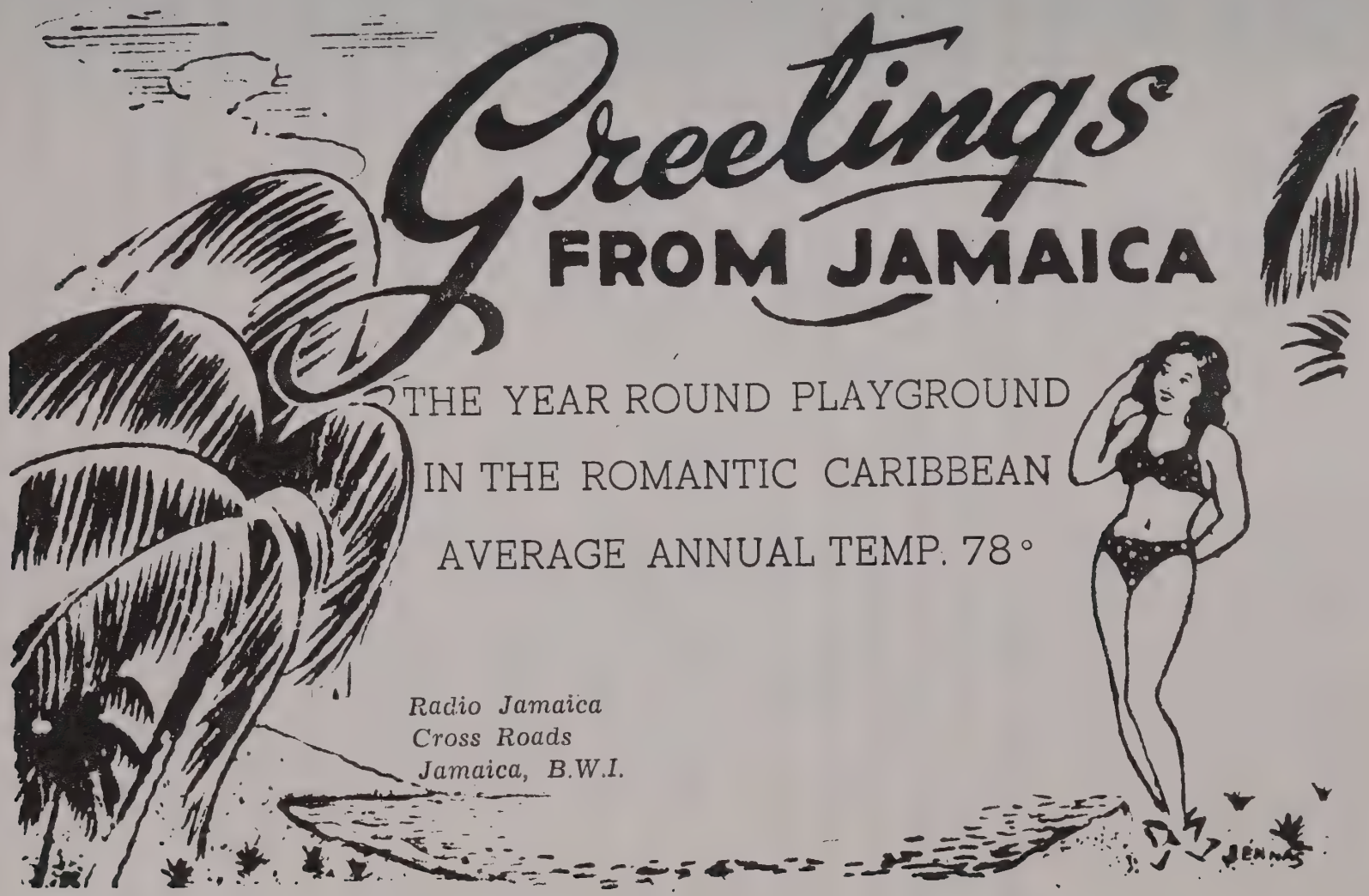
At the risk of placing opposites side by side, so do religious broadcasters welcome mail. The overall numbers cannot only help in general fund raising work through supporting churches, but the names and addresses gleaned from reports are sometimes used in a more direct way— to build a mailing list for regular direct mail monetary appeals.

So while the reporter may have a QSL uppermost in mind when preparing and mailing a letter, that report may be received with open arms or raised eyebrows or outright irritation at the station.

Listeners must also accept some of the blame for the increased difficulty in obtaining replies. Many stations have commented on the large number of poor quality reports they receive, as well as reports that demand a reply or are otherwise rude in nature. The tendency of some listeneres to seek QSLs for every frequency on which a station operates has added to the increase in the number of reports some stations receive. This surge in volume with the attendent problems for the station in handling larger quantities of mail, has also led to cutbacks in some instances. The increased number of people who are taking up shortwave listening and reception reporting has also contributed to that increase but that isn't a development we can condemn.

Increased costs for the listener enter into the picture too. Postage costs continue to rise. So have the prices for International Reply Coupons, foreign mint stamps and airmail envelopes. More reluctant repliers added to one's logbook create the need to send more follow-ups which, in turn, means still more postage and ever higher costs.

What all this comes down to, then, is that in today's QSL'ing environment more effort than ever must go into the preparation of a reception report. The days of the five minute program log, generalized details and unreadable handwritten chicken scratching are over, or they should be. Time, care, effort and thought must go into every reception report before it has its date with the mailman.


Greetings
FROM JAMAICA
THE YEAR ROUND PLAYGROUND
IN THE ROMANTIC CARIBBEAN
AVERAGE ANNUAL TEMP. 78°
Radio Jamaica
Cross Roads
Jamaica, B.W.I.

II - Reception Reporting 101

People who have both an interest in radio listening and the good fortune to have visited at least one foreign station and to have looked over the pile of reception reports that station has on file usually return with horror stories about the poor quality of those reports. The same thing holds true for people who have visited broadcast band stations in the United States as well as in other countries.

The bad reports often seem to outnumber the good ones. Whether this situation exists due to a lack of information about reporting and related matters or is simply evidence of an "I don't care" attitude is unknown, perhaps it is a mixture of the two. But whether it's due to a lack of education or indifference, the problem is a real one.

There are several elements which go into the preparation of a quality reception report and in this chapter we'll examine each of them.

Date of Reception

This point might, at first glance, seem so obvious as to not be worth mentioning. But there are things to keep in mind here. Beware of expressing dates as, for example, "4/2/85." That

may read as April 2 in the United States but in most other countries it comes out as February 4. It is wiser to spell out the date as April 2 or 2 April to avoid any confusion at the station. Time can also change the date, as we'll see shortly.

Time of Reception

Generally speaking, Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) or Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)— they are essentially the same— can be used in reception reports. For the larger international broadcasters or other stations which receive a great many reports, GMT or UTC presents no problem. For smaller stations, especially non-governmental outlets in third world countries, it is wise to also convert GMT or UTC into the local time in effect at the station.

The World Radio TV Handbook, as well as a number of other shortwave handbooks, guidebooks and so on, have listings, maps or tables which show how many hours a given country or area is ahead or behind GMT or UTC.

Smaller stations may simply not be all that used to dealing with "24 hour time" but, whether they are or not, it is usually easier for them to work with their own local time. Keep in mind, too, that summer/winter times are in effect in many countries besides the United States and that these time adjustments occur on a wide variety of different dates in countries around the world. If you know whether a particular country is on standard or summer time you are in good shape. In most cases you won't be entirely sure so just indicate that the local time you are mentioning is for standard time in that country and you're unlikely to have a problem.

Converting to local time can change the date of your reception with respect to GMT or UTC. A Latin American station logged in the United States at 0200 UTC on June 5th (it's

the next day UTC time after 0000 hours) was actually heard on June 4th in both the United States and at the station. Thus if you are including the local time at the station remember to adjust the local date accordingly.

Also, depending upon the difference in location between your receiver and the station, the International Date Line may enter the picture. Local time at the station may be a different date than at your location. It's a good idea to acquaint yourself with times and day changes relative to your location vs. those on the other side of the line. Otherwise you may end up reporting your reception on the wrong date as far as the station is concerned. The program details you give on the date the station may think you are reporting won't match those actually broadcast on that date.

Frequency

The frequency on which the station was received can be expressed either in Megahertz (MHz) or kiloHertz (kHz). It makes no difference so long as your commas and decimal points match the terminology you are using, i.e. 6,000 kHz or 6.000 MHz.

In this day and age of digital frequency readout on receivers the problem of determining the frequency to which you are tuned is hardly the stickler it used to be. However if you aren't using a receiver which displays the exact frequency you are still faced with the problem of determining the frequency on which you logged the station. Larger broadcasters (smaller ones too, for that matter) may announce the frequency on which they are operating and that, of course, solves the problem.

Failing that kind of assistance from the source, if you know about where you are on the dial you can usually assume the frequency to be such and so, based upon listings in shortwave

logs or club bulletins. There are cases of stations which operate two transmitters carrying the same program at the same time on frequencies quite close to each other and that's a situation which calls for a little caution.

Other stations may have unstable transmitters which drift off frequency or consistantly operate off the nominal channel. In such cases you are pretty much left to your own devices. If you have a bandspread on your receiver and have it calibrated or employ a crystal calibrator or frequency meter you can normally do a fairly accurate "guestimate" of the correct frequency. If the exact frequency can't be quoted then give it as an approximation. You want to make it as close as you can, obviously, and inform the station that the frequency quoted is an estimation.

There have been occasional instances where a station operates off its nominal or assigned frequency and the broadcaster won't answer reports which give the actual operating frequency. If you feel this is happening in a particular case you can always play the game the way the station seems to want it played and quote the frequency you think they think they were on!

The use of meters or meter bands as an adjunct to the frequency information is largely going out of fashion. Such phrases as "9.585 MegaHertz in the 31 meter band" are still used by many stations, and by many listeners in their reception reports. Nobody has yet passed any rules taking this practice out of use completely. Indeed, it still has some value since some stations in certain areas (Indonesia and Latin America are examples) still use the meter band as a reference point. So, it hardly distracts from the report to include the meter band if not an exact quotation of the specific meters. Meters can be obtained through the formula:

$$\text{Wavelength in meters} = \frac{300{,}000}{\text{frequency (kHz)}}$$

Programming Data

This is the meat and potatoes of reporting, the proof you heard what you say you heard. And it is the area which can be the biggest stumbling block for the report writer.

Rule One in reporting program information is to be as complete, as detailed and as specific as possible. Rule Two is not to generalize or combine your information. That is, not to say "0003-0010 news, 0010-0020 music, 0020-0025 talk." Program elements should be itemized with a time line, as in the following example:

0003 UTC - Man reading the news. Items included a report on fighting in Lebanon, the visit of an economic delegation to Bulgaria, a plane crash that killed fourteen .. (and so on)

0010 - fanfare ending the news. Played a rock song with male vocalist and guitar. I did not recognize the title.

0013 - music— "Chicago" by Frank Sinatra.

0017 - music— instrumental selection by the Herb Alpert group.

0020 - station identification by woman: "This is Radio Central America from San Jose in the Republic of Costa Rica."

- Talk by a man on industrial development in Costa Rica, including...

You get the idea. Instead of generalizing things in large lumps until the summary might describe the programming of three dozen stations on the air at that hour, you list the items separately with as much detail as you can provide on each one.

It's a good idea to have a clock which shows the seconds, set to the WWV time signal, so you can provide accurate times for the items you report.

Of course, all too often program details will be difficult to come by, particularly when listening to a station broadcasting in a language you don't understand.

There is no easy answer to the foreign language problem, assuming you don't speak them all yourself. You'll have to spend a lot of time listening to the station for as long as you can and with as much concentration as you can muster. With time and practice you will learn to pick out key words and phrases from news items, since place and people names in the news sound much the same in most languages. With practice it will become less a chore to pick these out. The same thing holds true for station identification announcements.

Describe the music as best you can. In many cases you won't recognize some or all of the artists or titles but you can still describe the type of music played, the vocal style, the rhythm, instrumentation and so on. One can, over a period of time, learn to spot the major types and styles of music around the world.

Product names can often be picked out of foreign language commercials, multi-voice promotional announcements or station identification announcements described, musical themes, talks on particular subjects, musical dedications, relays of broadcasts from networks or other stations, sporting events, dramas, telephone call-in shows, exercise programs and so on. There are many formats and program types which can be recognized, even though you don't know the language being used. The more you listen, the more practice you get, the easier it becomes and the more detail you will be able to include in your report. You'll probably end up surprised at just how much you can dig out of a foreign language broadcast as you gain experience and your ability develops.

How much should you include in the way of program detail? How long a period of time should this part of the report cover? The standard answer to that one is thirty minutes. But that is by no means a hard and fast rule, nor should it be. A station that is broadcasting in English and being clearly received may provide you with enough program information in five or ten minutes, although the station may not appreciate it if you listen to the program that briefly. A station with a poor signal or one which is a difficult read—in English or otherwise—may require a couple of hours' listening time in order to obtain a sufficient amount of program detail. You might even find you have to listen to the station over a period of several days in order to build up enough information for your reporting log. It all depends on the individual situation. You must provide enough evidence to convince station personnel that it was their broadcast which you heard. Once you feel you have the ammunition to do that, then you've collected enough.

Reception Quality

There are a number of ways to format information covering how well you heard the broadcast. The QSA/QRK code is an older form borrowed from amateur radio and no longer very much used for broadcast reporting. In this system QSA stands for the signal strength and is rated from one to five, one being the weakest, five the strongest. QRK indicates the readability or understandability of the signal's content and is also rated from one to five, one being the poorest, five the best, i.e. not understandable at all to perfectly readable.

The SINPO reporting code was developed and adopted by international broadcasters to provide a more detailed format for rating reception. In this system "S" stands for signal strength, "I" for manmade interference, "N" for atmospheric noise

(static), "P" for propagation (fading) and "O" for overall reception quality. A slight variation of the SINPO code is SINFO. They are the same except that the "F" in SINFO stands for fading.

A one to five rating is given for each letter, where one stands for a barely audible signal, extreme interference, extreme noise, severe fading and an unuseable overall quality. At the other end of the scale, five indicates excellent strength, no interference, fading or static and excellent overall quality. When written the code is given as SINPO: 43343, rather than S413N3P403.

STRENGTH	INTERFERENCE	NOISE
5 Excellent	5 None	5 None
4 Good	4 Slight	4 Slight
3 Fair	3 Moderate	3 Moderate
2 Poor	2 Severe	2 Severe
1 Very Poor	1 Extreme	1 Extreme

PROPAGATION	OVERALL MERIT
5 None	5 Excellent
4 Slight	4 Good
3 Moderate	3 Fair
2 Severe	2 Poor
1 Extreme	1 Unusable

The SINPO reporting code.

Another variation is the SIO code which contains only the elements of (S) strength, (I) interference and (O) overall quality. It disregards the elements of static and fading and thus provides less information to the broadcaster.

If reception quality changes while you are monitoring the station be sure to so indicate, along with the time the change occurred. If you are using a SINPO-type code it is sufficient just to give the time the change took place or was first noticed, along with the new code reading. You might also want to include such notations as, for instance, that at 0027 the BBC's carrier came on the frequency and that, at 0029 when BBC

programming began, reception of the reported station was wiped out.

Every now and then discussions erupt in club bulletins about whether it is possible to have a SINPO reading with a higher figure for "O" than the lowest of any of the other figures. The general feeling is that one cannot give an overall rating of say, four, when any of the other elements were three or lower since the lowest of the other four figures automatically brings the overall rating down to at least that of the lowest figure being reported.

Written Descriptions

SINPO codes and such are fine for use when reporting to the larger broadcasters who are used to dealing with them. To the smaller stations, however, they can be just so much gibberish. In the latter case it's a good idea to cover yourself either by using a report form which has the SINPO code and an explanation as part of the form or by dispensing with the code's use entirely in favor of a written description for each element in the code. That is, noting that the signal was "fair," interference was "moderate" and so on.

Don't attempt to make the people at the station feel good by giving them a better rating than their signal deserves. Larger stations in particular, get thousands of reception reports and they have a pretty good idea of how well their broadcasts are received. Reception reports, in theory at least, are supposed to be a service to the station and you do them no favors by padding or playing with the numbers.

Interference

The usual term to refer to interference is QRM— another abbreviation borrowed from amateur radio, although those particular letters are seldom used in broadcast reporting anymore. It is, instead, expressed as a number in the "I" section of the SINPO, SINFO or SIO reporting codes. This is manmade interference and it comes in many shapes and sizes, all of them annoying.

It is often advisable to do more than just tag a number onto the code or term the interference as moderate or whatever it was. You can go into greater detail. For instance, what station or stations was causing the interference? Was it co-channel (same frequency) or was it five kiloHertz higher? Was it splatter from a powerful outlet ten kiloHertz lower? Perhaps it was a code (CW) station, radioteletype or other form of utility transmission. Maybe the signal was suffering from jamming or the Russian over-the-horizon radar was pecking away. If you can name the offending station so much the better. If a utility station was involved it is best not to use the term "utility" since that is more an in-hobby term. Better to try and give the type of utility station or still better yet, its name and location. There are numerous listings of utility stations available and it may be useful to own one or two of these directories to help you identify utility station interference.

Locally generated electrical interference from applicances, electrical power lines and such can be a hefty factor in detracting from quality reception. Television sets and home computers can also be common culprits. If one of these was a problem, it too should be mentioned.

Fading

Did the station's signal strength fade up and then drop down again? If so, how long did the cycle take? Was it a slow or a fast fade? Was it flutter fading? Did the station's signal simply "fade up" out of the noise thus enabling you to log it? Did it eventually fade out?

In amateur radio fading is "QSB" but, again, that term is little used in broadcast reporting today.

Noise

There's little more you can do here except to note how severe the noise (static) was. Perhaps there were storms in your area during the reception which caused most of the problem. More likely it was general static caused by storms hundreds or thousands of miles away from your location. Neither you nor the station have much control over the situation in any event. "QRN" is the amateur radio term for noise but, like QRM, it is used little in reporting to broadcast stations anymore.

Reception Conditions

This is a difficult element to describe with any real accuracy. But you may want to make mention of whether conditions were good, bad or average. If they were unusual you can describe or indicate the form those unusual conditions took. Engineers and frequency planners at the larger stations may appreciate your including the WWV "A," "k" and solar flux indices at the time of reception. Even though they may have access to these, including them in your report saves having to look them up should the engineer be curious as to what they were.

Equipment Used

List the receiver and antenna combination you used to receive the station. Very often receiver model numbers don't have very much meaning for station personnel so it's a good idea to also include a verbal description of the receiver, i.e. the number of RF stages, whether it has digital frequency readout, whether it is a desk model or a portable and so on. One good method of describing your receiver is simply to include a photocopy of the page in the receiver manual which lists the specifications. If there's no picture of the receiver on that page you can place it in a blank spot or on the back when you photocopy the page. You can also use copies of advertisements or brochures about the receiver.

Antenna descriptions should indicate the type of antenna used (longwire, vertical, inverted "V" or whatever it is) along with the length, height and directionality if any. Height and length should be expressed in meters, although you can also include the distance in feet.

In addition to your receiver and antenna, any associated equipment you used to help improve reception should also be mentioned. Brand names of this "outboard" equipment usually mean even less to a station than receiver brand names and model numbers. Thus it's best to just indicate what the unit is designed to do— a preselector, antenna tuner, antenna match unit or whatever it happens to be.

Program Comments

Until a few years ago most reception reports ignored this area and most probably still do. Then the larger stations began to complain about the lack of program comment input from listeners and suddenly program comments were "in." For some

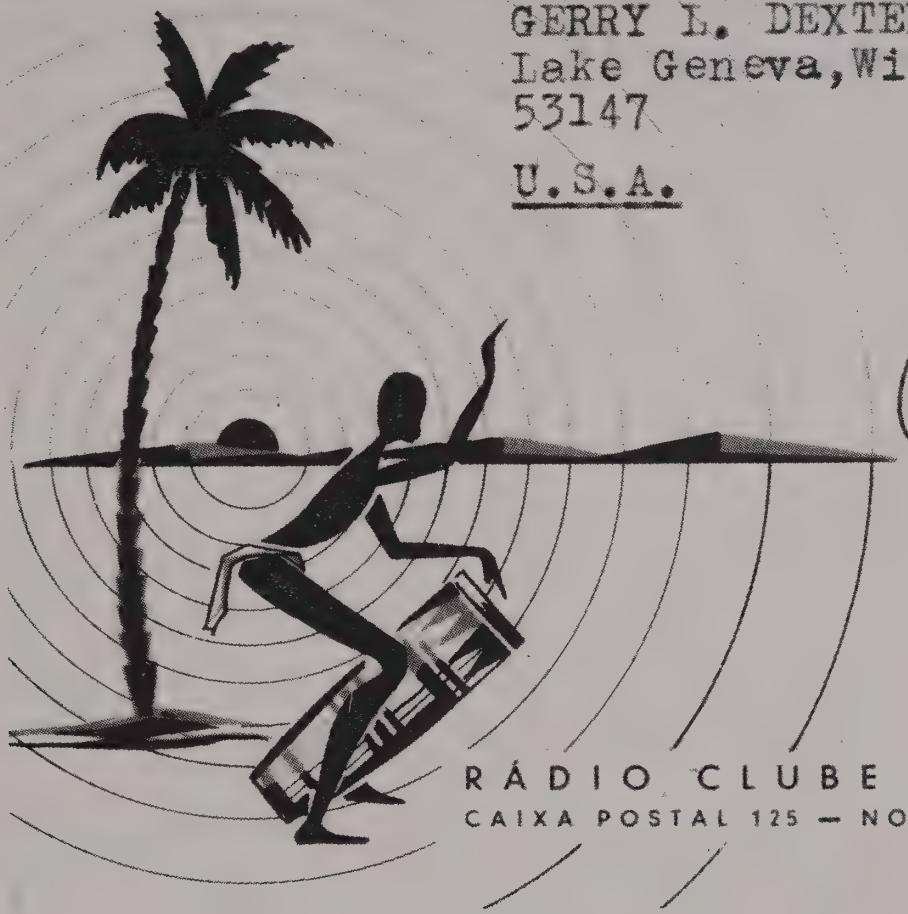
stations program comments are perhaps more desirable than the reception data itself so the importance of including some comments about what you heard has increased considerably. Those stations you log which were broadcasting in your native language should get your thoughts on whether or not you liked what you heard, and why! At the same time, stations will be glad to have your suggestions for new programs or topics, questions for their letterbox shows and so forth. Comments and suggestions should be well considered and not involve vague statements such as "I liked your music."

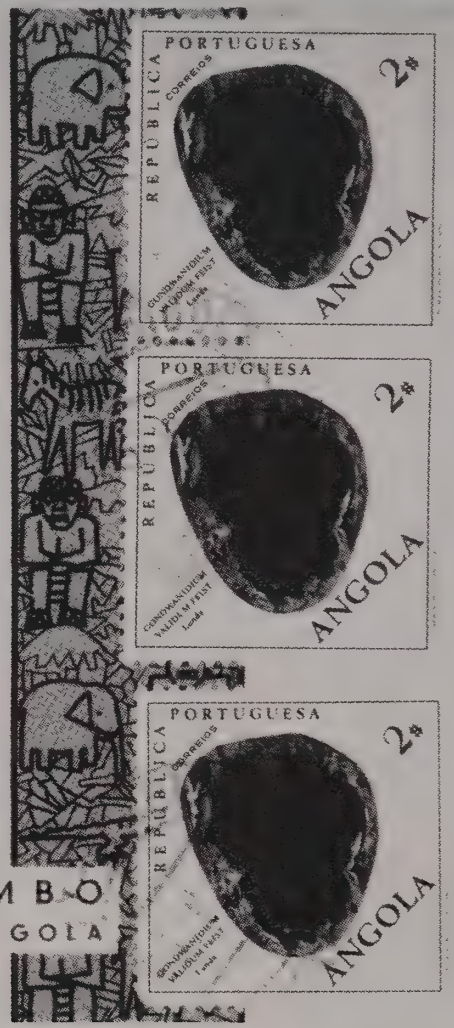
Of course making comments on programming is difficult if not impossible when one is listening to a broadcast in a foreign language. Such transmissions however, especially those on the tropical bands, are generally not directed to your area anyway so the station is less concerned with your opinion. You can, however, compliment the station on the music played, particularly if it was of the local or regional variety. It is always possible that you may end up having a selection dedicated to you on the air. Beyond that people at radio stations, like people everywhere, appreciate honest compliments.

Exmº. Senhor

GERRY L. DEXTER
Lake Geneva, Wisconsin,
53147

U.S.A.





RÁDIO CLUBE DO HUAMBO
CAIXA POSTAL 125 — NOVA LISBOA — ANGOLA

III - Putting It All Together

Now that the basic reception information has been copied off the receiver and given some thought it's time to prepare the actual report.

Formats

The form your report takes can be a reception report form, a letter which contains all of the details of the report or a combination of the two. Each has its own advantages and drawbacks. It's important to remember that you needn't get into a rut here, that every report need not take the same format. A report form may be just the thing in many instances but for other situations you may find a personal letter report more appropriate and for still other cases you may want to use both a report form and a letter.

Reception report forms are available from some of the listener clubs and one or two commercial shortwave supply houses. You can also design your own form and have it printed up in quantity. The latter method lets you tailor the form to your own tastes and needs. Report forms tend to place limitations on the amount of information you can supply and, often as not, may leave you with the need to send a letter as well.

KBS 라디오한국

Reception Report

Sender

(Name)

(Address)

Receiver Type:

Occupation:

Antenna:

Age:

Date	Time (GMT)	Frequency kHz	S	I	N	P	O	Remarks

Rating

Program details:

Remarks on program content:

Date:

A typical station-suppled report form.

A number of shortwave broadcast stations invite further reception reports when they send their verification and often this request is not so much stated as evident by the inclusion of a reporting form that the station has created for use by its listeners. One is often struck by the relative simplicity and straightforwardness of such station-created report forms and may even be tempted to think that perhaps all the extra information you've been supplying hasn't really been necessary. Perhaps so, perhaps not. It may be that the station needs no more information than it has provided room for on the form. But it is equally likely, probably more so, that the broadcaster has simply compromised, has provided a form with room for the minimum amount of information it wants and has intentionally kept the form simple. A complicated form is, after all, less likely to be filled out by as many listeners. Obviously if you wish to report to the station again, the use of the station-supplied form is perfectly fine, though you should feel free to add additional detail where it can be worked into the form.

A letter report should include all of the basic data we've discussed so far. The letter, as opposed to the form, allows you to include as much information as you wish— personal notes, program comments and so on. Some stations, it should be noted, do prefer that program comments be given on a separate sheet of paper.

Combinations of letter and report form probably work best in most cases, although they require more time to prepare. The form contains the basic reception information and the letter covers your comments, verification request and so on. Be sure and place your name and full address on both the form and each page of the letter.

It should go without saying that reception reports should be typed. If you do not type then print your report clearly and neatly. Don't make the people at the station try to decipher your doctor's scrawl.

Letters can also include information about yourself— your age, job and other interests, and your family. If you are using a report form which has the verification request built in, the letter also gives you the opportunity to restate your hope for a reply. Generally a letter will add a much more personal touch to your report than will a cold and impersonal form by itself. Forms alone are fine for many of the larger stations which you can pretty much count on for a reply, but even these will appreciate personal comments and your views on their programming.

Tailoring Your Letter

This is another hard to define area but it amounts to keeping the people to whom you are writing in mind. There is no list of do's and don'ts we can provide to cover every situation. Mostly it involves using some common sense. You should try to be aware of the forms and sensibilities prevalent in the country to which you are writing. To use a couple of rather outrageous examples, it would be unwise to send a report to Radio Nacional de Angola and mention how well Radio RSA in South Africa is received, or worse yet how much better South Africa is heard than they are! Nor would you want to mention your British ancestry when writing to Argentina. If you are trying to verify Tibet or Uzbekistan or Sumatra don't stress how much you want to QSL that "country." They are considered separate countries only within the hobby and Radio Beijing will not take too kindly to your reference to Tibet as a separate country.

If you are a male and you wear your hair long it's sometimes unwise to include your photo with your report to stations in some third world countries. Your hairstyle may be evidence to the station that you are a troublemaking drug addict!

Usually it is a good idea to stay away from politics in your letters. Certainly it is acceptable to include condolences on the

loss of a national leader or congratulations on the ascendency of a new one. But comments, pro or con, about a nation's politics or its stand on current issues— even if you personally agree with them— can have just the opposite of the desired effect should your report fall into the hands of someone who does not agree with the policies of his government.

Show your interest. Read up on the country or area to which you are reporting and include one or two questions on subjects you'd like to know more about.

If you can, find an area of mutual interest, something which might be of interest to those at the station but which also involves you. Perhaps you are planning to visit that country or know someone who recently did or just saw a television program about the country or recently read a book about it.

Forms of Address

Americans tend to be more informal in their approach towards other people whom they don't know well and this is not a trait common to much of the world. While it is often customary for an American writing to another American for the first time to open the letter with "Dear Jack," such informal salutations shouldn't be used in overseas correspondence. Two people in some European countries may have known or even worked with each other for years before they progress to a relationship on a first name basis. So be formal in both your salutations and in the way in which you address your letter. It should be Mr. John Smith on the envelope and not John Smith.

Names in Latin America can get quite complex. Men and women alike carry both their father's and mother's surnames, the father's being the most important. Someone named Carlos Molina Robles may be addressed as Sr. Carlos Molina Robles in

a letter, or as Sr. Carlos Molina or as Sr. Molina or as Sr. Carlos Molina R. But not as Sr. Robles.

Senorita Alica Moreno Munoz, when she marries Sr. Molina, becomes Senora Alicia Moreno Munoz de Molina Robles and may be addressed with her long full name or as Senora Moreno, Senora Moreno Munoz de Molina Robles or as Senora de Molina Robles. The mother's surname is often simply expressed with an initial.

Watch Your Language

Keep in mind that smaller stations may not be at all familiar with the terms and abbreviations used in shortwave listening. Thus you should avoid the use of such terms when writing to most smaller stations. Spell things out instead. Signing a letter to a station unaquainted with DX terms with "73" above your signature may cause the reader on the other end to wonder why you are still in high school if you are seventy three years old!

Special Requests

If you are hoping to get a transmitter site indicated on your QSL card, want to be sure to get on the mailing list for program schedules or have some other special wish it can be helpful to capitalize and/or underline this, although at the same time be careful that doing so doesn't make it read like a demand. Indenting and the use of various forms of spacing or multiple type faces can also help make your report more readable.

The QSL Request

Let's stress again that the appeal for a reply must be polite and friendly! You catch more flies with honey or whatever that old saying is. The QSL request should be placed either near the end of your letter or in the first paragraph of your report. In any event, try to avoid burying it somewhere in the middle where it is less likely to get noticed. And remember that no station anywhere owes any listener anywhere a verification, even if they've offered one on the air.

Finally, express the hope that your report has been of interest and offer to report again in the future, or regularly, if you are really prepared to do so.

Thanks For The Memories

One very nice touch in the reporting and QSL'ing game is the sending of a thank you card to the station after the verification has been received. The thank you can also take the form of a full letter which, in turn, can occasionally lead to further correspondence with the station and real international two-way communication for the listener. Stations very often appreciate receiving such thank you's back from the listener. But, unfortunately, the practice seems largely ignored by most listeners. Most, upon receipt of the QSL, simply scratch that one off the list, enjoy their celebration, and start worrying about the next target. Perhaps the additional cost involved has something to do with this disinclination to send thank you notes. But, to call a spade a spade, some DX'ers could care less if a station writes again, to them or to anyone else, once the all-important verie is in hand. We know of at least one instance where the lack of acknowledgements and thank you notes turned a station away from replying to reception reports.

Cards Yes, Cards No

Postcards or SWL cards are the perfect size upon which to print a QSL. But they fail badly as a form for reception reporting and should never be used for this purpose. There is no way you can get sufficient detail on a postcard, however quick, easy and handy they may be to use. This, of course, doesn't apply to reporting to amateur radio stations where sending reports on cards is the standard way of doing things.

Well known DX'er Jerry Berg in Massachusetts has been fairly successful using a card-type report form but in this case it is not a postal size card. He has developed a report form printed on card stock which is just smaller in size than a standard number ten envelope and he has made it the nucleus around which he builds his reports to Latin America. By using both sides of the card (and typing) he is able to include sufficient programming detail. The result is a report nearly as complete as a full blown report form. The card is sent inside an airmail envelope, along with return postage and an assortment of goodies.

His reason for taking this approach had nothing to do with wanting to hedge on the amount of information he provides to the station but rather was a question of being forced to cut down on the amount of time which went into report preparation.

Some listeners do make use of cards, usually the picture postcard type. They send them out as an interim reminder to a station that no reply has been received to the original report. Their use is not to report reception details but simply to serve as a nudge to the station.

The Goodie Factory

Some years ago when Radio Reloj in Costa Rica was not answering reports, a group of listeners were sitting around discussing what could be done to cure the situation when one of them piped up and said "Send them a hamster!"

So many listeners now include a little something extra as a sweetener in their reports it's a wonder someone hasn't really tried sending a hamster. The practice of sending extras is so common now that one has to wonder if the stations haven't come to expect these little presents. If that's true then these little gifts are more important than ever before and their use ignored at one's own risk. But, again, there's less a need to use this technique when reporting to the larger stations. It's the smaller broadcasters, the tougher-to-verify stations where the practice really comes into play. Beyond the loggings of the common international broadcasters then, it's a good idea to make it a regular practice to include a little something extra inside the envelope.

These extras can and do run the gamut. No one has ever compiled a list of the possibilities. To attempt to do so would be akin to trying to list snowflake designs. No such list would ever be complete because people are always coming up with new twists and fresh ideas. Much depends on the individual and his or her own imagination and resources. A few of the more common items now being sent include:

- Picture postcards of scenes in your city or area, sometimes with a note of good wishes on the back.
- Photographs of yourself, your shack, your family.
- Bumper stickers from local radio stations.
- Brochures from your local chamber of commerce or nearby points of interest.
- Your business card.
- Your SWL card.

- Personal promotional sheets you've had designed and printed in quantity with shack photos, your hobby accomplishments and the like.
- Newspaper or magazine clippings about the country to which you are writing (if they are not negative in content).

Normally such special enclosures should be fairly light in weight and fit into a standard size number ten envelope since the more weight you add to the report the more it will cost to mail. And there is also something to the theory that too heavy a letter becomes a temptation for theft by postal workers.

You can, of course, send practically anything, regardless of size and weight, if a reply is sufficiently important for you to accept the extra expense of getting it there. But even within the field of smaller items the possibilities are limited only by your imagination. What can you find or create that is unusual? Photos of the space shuttle? Lists of the current top forty hits? One listener once found a store selling little packages of volcanic dust from Mt. St. Helena and sent those!

Commemorative stamps and picture postcards are probably the most commonly sent items. Try and find something a bit different for your own use, especially when reporting to the more difficult stations.

If you also collect station pennants, bumper stickers, foreign stamps or whatever, it is helpful— if you are asking the station to send you a particular type of item— to include something similar rather than offering nothing in trade.

What's In A Name?

Often verifications, that's what. A very important key to getting replies from stations is the use of a verie signer's name, a person who is known to issue QSLs for the station. Again this

is not so vital at the larger stations where QSL'ing is often delt with on a near assembly line basis. But it can mean the difference between a QSL and an empty mailbox when you deal with the smaller broadcasters.

When you address your letter to the individual who handles reports the chances that your report will reach his or her desk are much better. A letter addressed just to the station is likely to be opened by anyone there and may never reach the person or department normally handling reports. No guarantees of course, there never are, but the use of a verie signer's name will often make all the difference.

Names of verification signers can be found in the *World Broadcast Station Address Book* by this author, published by Gilfer Shortwave, P. O. Box 239, Park Ridge, NJ 07656. It is also useful to make it a habit to follow the QSL columns in the club bulletins you receive in order to keep current with changes.

Where no verification signer's name is available you can direct your report to such titles as the manager, director, gerente (in Spanish-speaking countries), chief engineer and so on. Chief engineers are less likely to be involved in answering mail at smaller stations than are managers.

Addresses

Obviously a correct address to which to send your report has something to do with receiving a reply. After all, your report has to reach the station before it has much chance of being verified! Station addresses can be found in the *World Broadcast Station Address Book* mentioned above, and in the *World Radio TV Handbook,* available from most shortwave supply houses and at larger book stores. New addresses and address changes often show up in the QSL columns of the various club bulletins.

Sometimes a new station will take to the air and no address is immediately available. Don't let that stop you. Fortunately radio stations are usually well known in their home cities so chances are reasonably good that a report sent to the station in the appropriate city and country will get to the broadcaster. In Latin America many stations use an Apartado Postal (post office box) so it's often helpful to include "Apartado #?" in your made-up address in the hope the post office will place the letter in the station's box. You can also try mailing the report to the station in care of Poste Restante (general delivery) in the proper city. Or, you can place your entire report, envelope and all, inside another, larger envelope and address the outer one to the postmaster of the city involved, along with a request that he see to its delivery.

When you have a choice between a post office box and a street address, use the former. That's Apartado Postal in Spanish, Boite Postale in French, Caixa Postal in Portuguese. Such a practice keeps your letter out of at least one pair of additional hands during the long delivery process, reducing by that much the chance it will get lost.

If you choose not to chance sending a report to a station with a guessed-at address you can simply wait until one turns up.

Address Formats

The first line of the address should be the name of the individual to whom you are writing or the title of someone at the station. The second line would then contain the name of the station. Third in the line-up is the street address or box number, fourth the name of the city, province and zip code where the latter two are applicable. Sometimes you'll have only a city name, sometimes the city and province, sometimes all three. The last line contains the country name, in capital letters and

underlined. Incidently, proper form calls for capitalizing the city name as well.

In some instances when writing to a little-known place such as Kiribati, it may be advisable to add some clarification— in this instance "South Pacific Ocean"— in parenthesis under the country name. On rare occasions you will have to make a notation that the letter is to go "via Capetown, South Africa" (if you find yourself in the happy circumstance of reporting to Tristan da Cunha!) Usually when mail is to go via a specific route such requirements are indicated as part of the station address information so don't worry about trying to decide when to use it. You will usually know when.

If you have the name of a verification signer but have some doubt as to whether he or she is still at the station you can include the signer's name as "Attn: Sr. Sanchez" in the lower left hand corner of the envelope.

If Sr. Sanchez has left the station, chances are that your letter will be opened anyway which is what you want in this case, rather than perhaps being forwarded to Sr. Sanchez or, more likely, simply being thrown away.

Absolutely Airmail

The choice between airmail or surface mail is no choice at all. Airmail is vastly superior. Surface mail can seldom, if ever, be recommended since it is so very, very slow and is far more prone to loss or theft along the way. The savings in postage simply isn't worth the difference in the quality of service.

Use lightweight onionskin type paper for any letters you may include in the envelope, especially if you are writing more than one page or if your report form is on heavier stock, which is likely the case. Anything you can do to cut down on weight will contribute to saving money on postage.

If you use regular non-airmail envelopes be sure to print "Airmail" on the face of the envelope— twice doesn't hurt, or have it so stamped by the post office or use airmail stickers available at your office supply store.

Business size airmail envelopes can sometimes be difficult to locate, especially in large quantities. And in small packages of fifty or one hundred count they can be relatively expensive. You may therefore want to think about having a printer order a large quantity of lightweight airmail envelopes for you, then have him print your name and return address on them. Even with the printing cost quantity purchases can be relatively inexpensive when compared to purchasing them in smaller quantities. It will also save you from having to put your name and address on the envelope every time you use one.

Return Postage

The International Reply Coupon is still the standard method of supplying the station with postage units which will cover the cost of the station's reply. IRCs are sold at your local post office although smaller offices may have only a minimal supply or occasionally even none at all. Postal clerks are often unfamiliar with IRCs since they normally have little demand for them and you may find yourself having to explain what they are. The coupons must be rubber-stamped at the point of purchase and this stamp must be placed in the designated area on the left side of the coupon. Keep an eye on the clerk to make sure he does it correctly. Don't pay for coupons he stamps on the wrong side. They are useless.

How many IRCs to include with a report is a difficult question to answer because official numbers are changing all of the time. Two seems to be the most common number sent by listeners with reports. Some stations will reply when just one

COUPON-REPONSE INTERNATIONAL
Vale-respuesta internacional.
Este cupón podrá ser canjeado en todos los Países de la Unión Postal Universal por uno o varios sellos postales que representen el importe de franqueo de una carta ordinaria de porte sencillo destinada al extranjero
12 CENTÉSIMOS
Ce coupon est échangeable dans tous les Pays de l'Union postale universelle contre un timbre-poste ou des timbres-poste représentant le montant de l'affranchissement d'une lettre ordinaire de port simple à destination de l'étranger.
TIMBRE DU BUREAU D'ORIGINE
TIMBRE DU BUREAU D'ÉCHANGE
República de Panamá • República de Panamá
BENZIGER & Co. S.A. EINSIEDELN

An improperly stamped, and therefore useless IRC.

IRC is sent (and may have replied to others who sent none). A few stations do require a specific number of IRCs—four seems the upper limit. Again it's a situation that changes from time to time and knowing exactly how many to send in every case is impossible. One has to develop a feel for it, based on how well the station in question seems to be situated for answering reports and whether the station is easy or difficult to verify.

The use of IRCs isn't adviseable when you're dealing with stations located in smaller cities and towns. Local postal authorities in these areas (such as Peru) are often unfamiliar with them or refuse to be bothered with exchanging them, no matter what the rules say. In other cases the nearest post office which might exchange them is too far away to make it practical for the station.

In these cases it is far better to send mint (unused) stamps of the country to which you are writing. Mint stamps can be most readily obtained from the DX Stamp Service, 7661 Roder

Parkway, Ontario, NY 14519. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a current price list. This service, as the name implies, provides unused foreign stamps for hams and shortwave listeners, usually in denominations sufficient for a minimum weight airmail reply. Although the prices are rather high they are still a bargain compared to paying for the number of International Reply Coupons necessary to achieve the same result. They are easier for the station to use as well. Another source is William J. Plum, RD8, Glen Rd., Fleming, NJ 08822.

Mint stamps can occasionally be obtained from large philatelic dealers although you'll have to know the denominations needed for an airmail return. One can also write to the philatelic department of the postal authority in the capital city of the country in which you are interested. It's advisable to write and inquire about costs and procedures first, before you send off any money. Other sources might include overseas penpals you develop in specific countries or the occasional friend or relative who plans to visit a country from which you need stamps.

There are some cases in which return postage isn't necessary in any form. The communist nations reply readily without any return postage required. Well, most of them anyway. Since they are on the air largely for propaganda purposes they gladly take on the postage expense themselves. Certain other large broadcasters will also reply without return postage having been included but needless to say they appreciate it when it is enclosed. As a general rule you should send some form of return postage with your report unless you are certain it isn't necessary. Here again you simply have to develop a feel for the various situations as you encounter them.

Yet another unanswerable question is whether to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope using the mint stamps you are sending or just place those stamps in a glassine envelope and

include a separate self-addressed envelope. If the denominations you are including are insufficient for any reason and you've placed the mint stamps on the envelope it's possible the station may not notice the inadequacy and mail the letter, only to have it returned by their local post office for additional postage. On the other hand, an envelope you supply which is ready for mailing except for the all-important contents may be more apt to get used. But supplying your own envelope may also mean you will be deprived of getting the station's own letterhead envelope or will perhaps receive fewer enclosures from the station than you might have otherwise.

A compromise is simply to include a peel-off mailing label with your name and address on it. The station can then use your label on its own envelope and you have the best of both worlds. Additionally, it makes your report fractionally lighter in weight, certainly reduces the report's bulk and provides an opportunity to get the most from the station.

Outside Postage

Here's another question with differing opinions masquerading as absolute answers. Some believe the use of commemorative stamps dresses up an envelope and makes it more likely it'll be pulled out of a stack of more ordinary-looking letters and given attention. That's probably true at times. But the theory presumes the arrival of the letter at the station in the first place, which is a rather key point. The "other side of the stamp" holds that making a letter look too fancy is an open invitation to theft along the way, if only to obtain the colorful stamps. Consequently, the opposite viewpoint holds, one should use unattractive metered postage— get the letter to the station first and then worry about attracting attention! If pressed, we'd recommend the latter method. It has the

additional advantage in that the postal clerk must weigh the letter to determine how much postage to put on it and you're thus assured that the amount is going to be correct and the letter won't pop back to you two days later, demanding to be fed another stamp.

You might want to purchase an inexpensive postage scale for determining the amount of postage needed on your letters. Even if you use the metered method you'll still be able to determine ahead of time how much you're going to be tagged for the batch of letters you're about to mail.

IV - It's Greek To Me

The biggest hurdle for the reception report writer is dealing with foreign languages. It can be no small problem to try and write a letter in a language you do not understand. And despite the wide understanding of English throughout the world there are still numerous instances in which an English language report becomes a definite drawback and hinders or halts completely your chance of getting a reply. Many smaller local stations do not have English speaking personnel on their staffs and a report in a language no one at the station understands is very likely to be ignored.

Fortunately there are limits to the need for foreign language reporting abilities. Spanish is required for most of Central and South America. French is handy for use with the former French-controlled countries of Africa and stations in former or current French departments overeseas. Portuguese is necessary for most of the stations in Brazil and reports to Indonesian regionals should be in Indonesian. The need to be able to communicate in languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Swahili and so on is rare at best since stations where the native language is something other than Spanish, French, Portuguese or Indonesian seem to readily accept and respond to English language reports. Any advantage one might gain by being able to write a report in, say, Farsi, might bring a more complete reply or a response with more extras riding in the envelope, but

it is almost never the difference between a reply and no reply at all.

The need to be able to write reports in the basic four languages mentioned causes difficulties enough for the QSL collector who doesn't understand them and must therefore rely on artificial measures. But, there are paths around the problem.

Report Forms

Some clubs offer skeletal reporting forms or foreign language phrase lists in Spanish, French, Portuguese and Indonesian. The North American Shortwave Association, 45 Wildflower Road, Levittown, PA 19057, offers all four. The Australian Radio DX Club, P. O. Box 227, Box Hill, Victoria, 3128, Australia, has an "Indonesian Reporting Guide." The American Shortwave Listener's Club at 16182 Ballad Lane, Huntington Beach, CA 92649 offers a "Proper Reporting Guide" which deals with foreign languages. The SPEEDX club, 7738 East Hampton Street, Tucson, AZ 85715 and Radio Netherlands International, P.O. Box 222, 1200 JG Hilversum, The Netherlands both offer guides to reporting in Spanish. It is usually necessary to be a member of the club before you can obtain these aids so check on that requirement. For information on current costs and availability send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to those sources which appear as though they would best fit your needs.

Do It Yourself

The serious QSL collector might want to seek out someone proficient in the languages with which he needs help and ask to have two or three basic letters translated, one for the initial report

and a couple in reserve for follow-ups. These can then be typed individually from the master, as needed. A brief list of programming elements described in the foreign language is also helpful. Limited listings of this type are available in some listening guidebooks.

If you do some poking around it's usually not all that hard to find someone nearby, or a foreign penpal, another DX'er or an instructor at a nearby college who would be willing to help you out and provide you with some basics. You might offer to pay for the translation although, depending upon the source, you may end up having it done simply as a favor to you.

If you own a computer you can use this to turn out foreign language reception reports on your word processer once you have the basic information.

When you work with a foreign language be sure that you include any special markings, over or under the letters and words, as required.

It's also a good idea to obtain dictionaries for the languages with which you'll be working. This allows you the ability to add in needed words which you didn't think to have translated earlier and also helps in translating replies or at least in figuring out the gist of the reply when the verification comes in.

If you keep your eyes open for possibilities and make a reasonably determined effort it shouldn't be all that difficult to equip yourself for writing basic reports in the four most often used reporting languages, thereby allowing you to communicate with the stations of the world.

BAYRAK RADIO & TV
BRT

V - TRYING AGAIN

You've taken your logging, written a first class reception report, stuffed the envelope with attractive come-ons, made all the right and proper moves. Now, how long should you wait before assuming you aren't going to get a reply to your original report? Well, we can add this one to our collection of questions without hard and fast answers.

Monitoring the reply times from stations over many years has shown that the average response time for a station in Latin America is about nine weeks. Give 'em the benefit of a doubt, extend that by three weeks and say a total of three months altogether. That interval is a fairly safe one to apply to most other areas as well. But— naturally— there are many exceptions to that general guideline. Some stations will have their reply in your mailbox in a matter of two or three weeks. Radio Moscow and Radio Beijing usually average four to six weeks. Radio Pyongyang and Radio Tirana often take six months or longer. For Indonesians four months seems to be about the average. It is difficult to do anything more than speak in generalities since the waiting times vary so greatly even for a single station. A spot check of one QSL column in a club bulletin when this was written shows reply times for the Voice of Greece ranging anywhere from forty six days to one year! Wide variations like this are not at all uncommon.

Like so many aspects of reception reporting you have to develop a sixth sense for knowing when the time is right to take secondary steps in your QSL'ing effort.

The Follow-Up

When the waiting period appears to have gone on long enough (and don't be too impatient) then you can begin the follow-up game. You should have retained at least one copy of your original report on file, preferably several carbons or photocopies. Use the copies as needed and always keep at least one spare copy of your original on hand.

Essentially the follow-up consists simply of your original report plus a new covering letter. The new letter should point out that no reply was received to your first communication or other previous letters as the case may be. Mention the dates of the original letter(s) if you like. A paragraph or two will cover the main points, including another polite request for an answer. You can blame the mails for not having gotten your original report to the station. But after a few follow-ups condemning the poor mailman gets to be something of a lame excuse. Switch to wondering if you have the station's correct address (even though they wouldn't be reading your letter if you didn't) or note that you fully realize how busy the people at the station are, stressing how much you would appreciate an answer when they can find the time to send you a reply.

Back To Square One

Two years ago you heard Radio Imbabura in Ecuador but despite a report and several follow-ups they never responded. Like many Latins their life on shortwave may have been fairly

brief. Thus your only recourse has been to maintain your follow-up schedule, sending your reports to the station which is now active on medium wave only. Then, suddenly, the station reappears on the shortwave bands. That's an event which should noticeably increase your pulse rate.

It's one of those situations which calls for immediate action on your part. Re-log the station. Re-report it. And get it done as fast as possible. A station returning to the air after an absence is quite likely to have changed its ways so your chances for a reply are better.

There are many similar situations which arise on a regular basis and they all call for action on your part if they involve an as yet unverified station.

Perhaps the station has been continuously active without any interruption in its service. But maybe you hear the station carrying special holiday programming or election results. A stronger signal may be an indication that a new transmitter is in use. If so, the station may be more likely to appreciate and answer a report involving its new equipment. Perhaps you read that the station has new owners or a new verification signer's name appears in a club bulletin. Maybe a format change occurs or the station moves to a new frequency. All of these cases offer excellent opportunities to send a new report and all of them hold at least some improved promise of an answer where none was received before.

Certainly when you hear of someone receiving a reply from a station which has heretofore been known for its poor QSL policy you should act at once, even if it is only to mail out the fourteenth follow-up. When a station that hasn't been replying suddenly begins to do so or when a new station is answering reports but you haven't yet had a reply, it's wise to forget about any standardized waiting period you may have settled upon and follow-up or send a new report as soon as you can. Strike while the iron is hot. A month from now the replies may dry up again

and another long no reply cycle start all over. It may be months or even years before things swing back to the positive side again. Some such black periods last longer than the sunspot cycle!

It is important to be aware of what is happening in the QSL game, to know what others are achieving so that when information comes to hand which bears on your own QSL'ing situation you can put it to profitable use.

Is It Live or Is It...

Providing a station with a tape recording of your reception is certainly the best way there is to give the broadcaster an accurate reading of how well the station was received. In addition it's the best means of offering proof that you did, indeed, hear the broadcast. Tapes, like written reports, can also be faked although with more difficulty. A tape is, after all, still not proof that you heard the station through your own efforts on your own receiver.

Despite the advantages tape offers, recorded reports haven't grown to widespread popularity in reception reporting. From a practical standpoint a verification can usually be obtained without having to send a tape. And since a taped report involves considerably higher postage costs and a larger package trying to successfully reach its destination, it is more likely to be appropriated before it gets where it's going. In addition, tapes are sometimes unwelcome at larger broadcasters (Radio Netherlands is a current example) where the staff doesn't have time to sit down and play through them.

However tapes are more likely to be something of a curiosity at the smaller stations and thus more welcome.

The real advantage of taped reports shows up when you have a poor reception of a station which you don't feel you are

likely to hear again anytime soon, or at least not receive with any better quality. Under such conditions a written report containing sufficient detail is especially difficult to put together. A tape, on the other hand, may contain music or recognizable voices of announcers that station personnel can spot and thus prove your reception.

But take some care here. Don't try and record something which is so weak and garbaged up by interference that only another DX'er could tell there was a signal present. Personnel at stations have little more experience in listening to weak shortwave stations than the man on the street. Where you may hear music and talk, people at the station may hear nothing at all and conclude you were imagining things! Play your recording back before you mail it and decide whether it's really useable.

If you don't own a recorder it's a good investment to make. It should have an axuiliary input jack so that it can be patched directly into an auxiliary output jack on your receiver. If a receiver output is not available the earphone jack on the receiver will probably work. As a last resort you can simply place the recorder's microphone in front of the receiver's speaker, although you'll lose a lot of quality using this method.

Five or ten minutes of taped programming is usually sufficient, although you can certainly record more if you wish. If you check commercial audio supply houses you can sometimes find short-length cassettes that only run for about ten minutes. They are priced low enough so that you can purchase them in quantity.

Be sure you label the tape with the station name, frequency and the date and time the recording began. You may also want to keep a copy of the tape in case your first effort doesn't produce a verification.

Send a covering letter with the tape in which you repeat the date, time and frequency, as well as more detailed data on reception quality, your equipment and your request for a

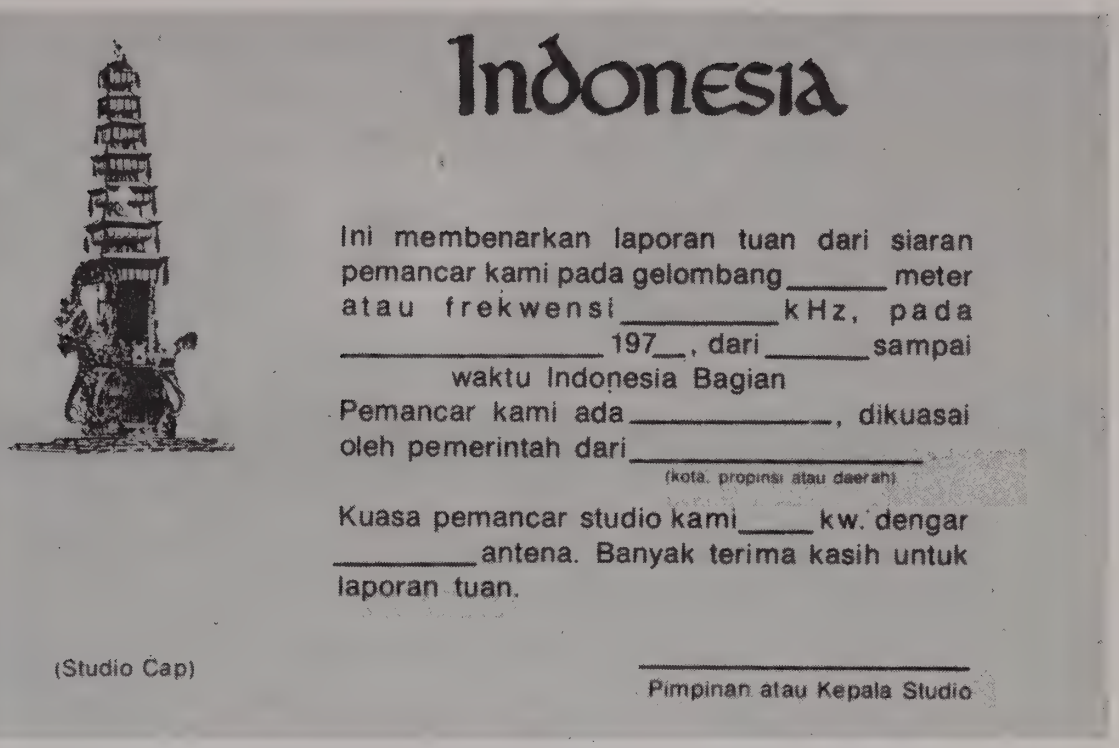
verification. You can specify if you'd like the tape returned—some stations return tapes with their own greetings or national music recorded on it and others won't bother to return the tape at all.

Despite the time that's gone by since the question was first raised, there is still no proof one way or the other that airport electronic security measures will damage tape recordings. But it's probably prudent to mark the outside of your envelope "Tape Recording—Do Not X-ray" just to be on the safe side. Some people take the added step of wrapping the tape in aluminum foil but there is no evidence that this offers much protection, if any.

Writing Your Own Ticket

The prepared card technique, at one time frowned upon by some as too easy a solution, has gained increased acceptance in recent years as QSL collecting gradually became more difficult. Not only that but the prepared card, while very useful, has hardly proved the as advertised easy way out. Stations are just as adept at ignoring reports containing prepared cards as they are those without them!

As the name implies, the prepared card is a QSL you make up yourself. Blanks can be left for the station to fill in the date, time and frequency of reception and whatever other information you may wish to have included. Or you can add in all the data yourself before mailing the card. The latter method makes it easiest for the station since all that's required is a signature and the station's rubber stamp or seal if it has one. Some feel this is *too* easy, that the station may tend to return the card almost automatically, or that if you have added such things as call letters, location, power and such— and one of them is incorrect— the station won't notice the error.


Indonesia
Ini membenarkan laporan tuan dari siaran pemancar kami pada gelombang _____ meter atau frekwensi _____ kHz, pada _____ 197__, dari _____ sampai waktu Indonesia Bagian
Pemancar kami ada _____, dikuasai oleh pemerintah dari _____
(kota, propinsi atau daerah)
Kuasa pemancar studio kami _____ kw. dengar _____ antena. Banyak terima kasih untuk laporan tuan.
(Studio Cap)
Pimpinan atau Kepala Studio

A prepared card designed especially for Indonesian stations.

Prepared cards can take many forms. Here are some examples:

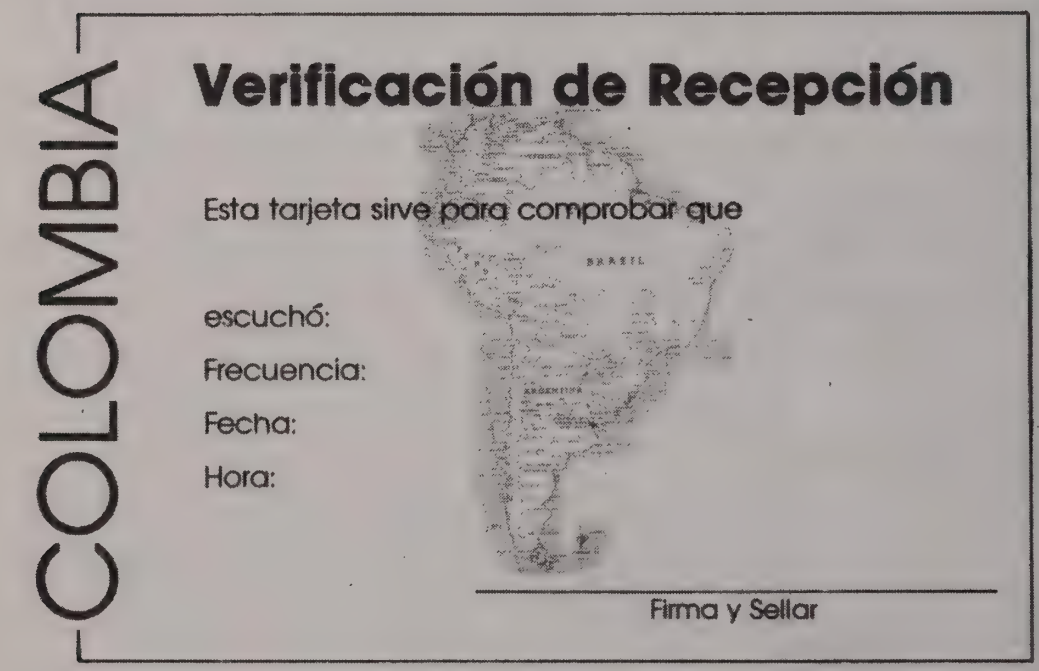
- Ordinary postcard type stock with the station name, location and reception information on it and room for authentication at the bottom.
- Commercially printed cards you design yourself which can be used for any station.
- Commercially printed cards designed for one country or area in which you specialize and often in the language of that area.
- Individually created cards using lettering kits, caligraphy, photos of the country pasted or laminated on the front (laminating kits are available at office supply stores).
- Picture postcards of the country to which you are writing with verification text and address on the other side. These

can sometimes be obtained from the tourist bureaus of the country in question.

- Computers with graphic capabilities can be used to create individual designs and card layouts.

Type or print your own name and address on the address side of the card. Indicate "Airmail" on the address side either by hand, with an airmail sticker or rubber stamp.

The same question arises concerning the use of mint stamps that vexed us earlier. Do you affix the stamps to the card or leave them in the envelope separately? Putting the stamps on the card makes it as easy as possible for the station to sign and rubber stamp the card and mail it back to you. But if you leave the stamps off you might get your card back along with a letter and perhaps a pennant or other extra. It works both ways and there's no way to say which route a station is likely to take.



Some DX'ers have prepared cards tailored for each Latin country.

Again, experiment with both methods and use the one which seems to be the most effective in your own case.

At the risk of insulting your intelligence we should probably note also that official postcards from the U.S. Postal Service can't be mailed outside the U.S. and its territories.

Er... Tentatives

There are instances when you just can't be one hundred percent certain that a logging is of the station you think it to be. Perhaps no station identification was heard but everything else points to your assumption being the correct one. The time, frequency, language, programming style and what others are hearing on this frequency at this time all fit correctly into the puzzle. So we enter the twilight zone of the tentative report, the maybe. When should you use it and when shouldn't you?

Don't use a tentative if there's more than a little doubt in your mind about what station you had in your headphones. Don't use it if there's a reasonably good chance of getting an additional logging and thus more details on the station, perhaps even an identifiction. Give the logging all you've got before you fall back on sending a tentative report.

Do use the tentative when there's little hope of obtaining any further loggings within a reasonable period of time. Do use it when you are ninety percent certain you had what you think you had.

A tentative report requires that you make it clear to the station that, while you believe it was that station you heard, you are not entirely positive. If you are using only a report form, an explanatory letter is also called for.

Tentative reports should be used with caution. Don't get into the habit of relying on the station to tell you what you heard. Once in awhile you have no other choice but in the great majority

of listening situations one can, with enough effort, be absolutely sure of the station heard before the reception report is mailed. If you find yourself taking the tentative trail in more than five or ten percent of your reports you are probably over-using the practice.

Keeping Track

Maintaining some kind of record system for the reports you've sent out is a necessary tool. It's a sort of inventory control system.

This can take several forms, ranging from a simple list of stations you don't have verified to lists of reports mailed, logged out on the date they were sent. It depends on how involved or complex you want to make the system and what kind of information you want to have accessible. The more thorough you are in this department the better equipped you will be to deal with problem situations.

A "Reports Out" list can be drawn up on ordinary ruled three-ring notebook paper or pages ruled off in a spiral notebook. Headings should be made for "Station," "Date Sent," "Date Received" and "Type." The latter column allows you to keep track of what kind of report you sent, i.e. an original, first follow-up, follow-up with a prepared card, tentative and so on. The system works well but it has a disadvantage in that if one sends a lot of reports it is difficult to check on when the last report was sent to a particular station. It's also hard to figure out what kind of reporting history you've gone through with a given station.

The way around this is not to enter your listings in date mailed order. A different form can be worked up which leaves more room for information about each station and includes space for entering each report or follow-up you send to a particular

station. Rule off the pages so there's enough room to type in the station name, address and verification signer if known. Follow this, down or across the page, with a series of smaller squares. These can hold abbreviated information concerning the date, type of report, form of return postage, types of enclosures and any other special techniques you used. Such a system gives you a complete picture of your efforts with a given station thus letting you see at a glance what's gone before and hasn't worked.

Such a technique probably isn't so important early on in the collecting game when most of the stations being reported are fairly reliable verifiers. But once you get into reporting the smaller stations, particularly in Latin America and Indonesia, the need for follow-ups and special techniques increases severalfold. It can be very helpful to know where you stand with each unverified station. Once the QSL comes in the celebration includes red-lining that particular column!

RADIO PROGRAMAS CONTINENTAL

HOHM 605 KC PANAMA

HO50 5995 KC PANAMA

HOK 640 KC COLON

HP5K 6005 KC COLON

HOH58 580 KC CHITRE

HOU 1025 KC DAVID

VI - TRYING TIMES

Ten to twenty percent of the stations you log, beyond the large international broadcasters, will throw up great walls of resistance to your QSL efforts. You will knock yourself against those walls time and again without seeing the slightest sign that your efforts are getting you anywhere. These are the most trying of times, times which call for the most determination on your part. They are the Super Bowls of QSL'ing and you can't call yourself a champion unless you can find a way to win a few of these contests.

Those stations in the extremely-difficult-to-verify category require special techniques over and above those already above-average reports you are sending. It is time to bring in the big guns.

Period Reports

One of the more impressive approaches, compared to the minimal expense involved, is the period report. This involves simply putting together a report covering a long period of time. It is a series of reports encompassing loggings over a number of days or even weeks. The method provides the station with more useful information in that it gives the broadcaster a better indication of how well the signal is received over a longer stretch of time as opposed to a report based on a single reception.

The initial or best logging can be written up in your usual reporting format. Programming information can be omitted from the remaining loggings, with just the date, time, frequency and SINPO rating, along with any notes on interference included.

This kind of report can be compiled on hand-drawn forms or you can use a page from a commercially printed pad of logging sheets, leaving blank any columns which do not apply to a reception report. If you plan to send a lot of period reports you might want to have a specialized form drawn up and then printed or photocopied as needed.

Another advantage of the period report is that it shows the station you have taken a real interest in providing them with information, you have spent extra time and made an extra effort. Your trouble is thus more likely to be rewarded with a fuller response or a reply where you might otherwise have received nothing.

Parallels

Larger broadcasters who may have more than one frequency in use to a given area at one time will appreciate comparative reports covering each frequency. These can be included on a date, time, frequency and SINPO basis, along with your main report. Including information on how well parallel frequencies are received gives the station an indication of which one is providing the best service to your area.

Comparative Reports

You can also comment on the strength and readability of other stations being received from the same geographical area at the same time, including the names, frequencies, SINPO

readings, powers and antenna beam directions, if known. This gives the station to which you are reporting a good feel for how well their own signal was doing in comparison to those of their neighbors. Although comparative reports aren't always possible they are a nice added touch when feasible and are likely to be appreciated at the station.

If applicable you can also provide frequency, time and SINPO ratings for the reported station on any frequencies it may have beamed to other areas at the time of your logging. Again, this applies to the larger international broadcasters more than it does to regional or local shortwave stations which may have only one channel in use at any one time.

Ring Their Bell

If you are willing to assume the extra expense involved try giving the unresponsive station a long distance phone call. A brief international call, although not cheap, isn't as outrageously expensive as it may first appear. It is something to give some thought to in those cases where the lack of a reply has you approaching the point of desperation.

If the native language of the station is one you are not able to speak you will, of course, have a problem. You can try and find someone who speaks the language to do the talking for you. Tell your translator who to ask for and, if possible, work out in advance what you want to have said. With pre-planning you should be able to keep the call down to a minute or two.

In some cases you may be able to find a nearby ham radio operator with phone patch capabilities who can try and make phone contact for you.

Telegrams

Here's another possibility you might put to occasional use. Keep the message brief and to the point such as, "No answer received to my letter of.....would be grateful for your reply." This can be an attention-getting reminder to the station or individual verification signer. Telegrams going to non-English speaking stations or broadcasters to which you've sent reports in their language should be sent in that language if possible.

Peppering

A station which has denied you for some time may not be receiving all your reports or may be setting them aside to answer at a later date, only "later" never seems to come. Whatever the reason may be, this method may overcome inefficient mail systems or procrastination by the station.

Have a number of copies of your original report made and mail one off every week or two. Or, if possible, bring fresh loggings into the picture. Take a new logging, make three copies of that report and send the original and the copies out over the next four weeks. Then repeat the process with a new report the following month. Some of these should get through and one may land on a different desk or fall into the hands of someone who hasn't seen your other letters and may decide to reply to you.

It's not necessary to include all of your usual package of extras in each mailing. If you normally send two or three items cut the number down to one. Or, load up on the first report in the series and send only the copy of the report in the next three mailings.

Shotgunning

Although it is not useable as often as some other methods, the shotgun technique can pay off now and then, when the circumstances are right. Shotgunning requires that you have the names of at least two people at the station. You direct simultaneous reports to each in separate mailings. Less effective is the use of various titles of department heads at the station—manager, program director, chief engineer, secretary and so on.

Go Over Their Heads

If the station which is giving you trouble is a member of a network or is group owned, try directing your report and a description of your problem to the main offices of the group or network. Occasionally the headquarters will reply with a verification on behalf of the station. In some cases, particularly in Latin America, a small station or one located some distance away from the capital city or nearest major population center will have a sales office in that city. These offices sometimes respond more readily than does the station itself, which may not really be equipped to answer letters from its actual studio and transmitter site.

Regional stations which are part of a main government network are sometimes more easily verified through the main government station in the capital city. Often it is a good idea to send simultaneous reports both direct to the regional and to the main station as well.

There are occasional instances— the so-called Radio Africa International from Equatorial Guinea is a recent example— when verifications can be obtained through the producers of programs carried by the station, instead of or in addition to replies direct from the station. Addresses for such programs are normally

announced on the air and, once another listener has had success with a particular program, often show up in the QSL columns of the club bulletins as well.

The John Alden Technique

Once it has become dishearteningly clear that the face-off between you and the station is resulting in lost battle after lost battle it still isn't time to give up. You may be losing skirmishes but you have not yet lost the war.

Scout around. You may be able to find someone who can go to bat on your behalf. This end-around method can take many different approaches and it's one of those techniques which is impossible to describe in all its forms due to the many variations and possibilities involved in each individual's situation. In short it amounts to finding someone who is willing to do the dirty work for you, either in person by visiting the radio station or by making the approach through the mail or telephone.

The third party, therefore, has to have one of two things going for him which you do not. He or she must be someone whose name and position are likely to command some respect on the part of station personnel or be someone who is geographically positioned to make the appeal on your behalf more easily than you could.

Where might you locate such a contact? Occasionally they practically fall into your lap but most of the time you'll have to search them out for yourself.

The most common cases involve people from within the listening community itself. A fellow DX'er plans a trip which will take him into one or more cities where there are stations from which you need a reply. He probably even plans to pick up a few for himself.

Perhaps you have an aunt headed for Cuzco, Peru on vacation. Maybe a missionary active in Ecuador speaks at your church.

Check to see if you can find other DX'ers living near the station or at least within the same country. At a minimum they may be willing to write to the station on your behalf. Perhaps a local ham operator knows someone in the area or can contact another ham there.

Failing that you can look toward the embassy— yours in the country in question or that country's embassy in your capital city. Our advice is to take the embassy route only in total desperation however. Too many listeners pestering embassies might eventually kill off the route for everyone. You can also try to find a company or other organization from your country which is active in the country from which you need a reply.

Someone who has an understanding of the listening hobby is, of course, your best bet although non-hobbyist friends and relatives are also preferred choices.

Dealing with total strangers to whom you must explain what you want and why is difficult and your chances of finding help under these circumstances diminish accordingly. Not only do you have to explain what you want but you must rely on someone else, a stranger, being willing to go out of his or her way to provide a crazy favor for someone far away whom they don't know. It's a chancy thing, at best. The outlook for success is probably better than continuing to send report after report to the station, but it is by no means guaranteed. There will be many times when you can't even find a contact.

It's a good idea to include prepared cards in such cases— with the stamps on them. You'll have to explain what you want done and it's also a good idea to request that the person helping you not be satisfied with the station's promise to take care of the matter. Better that he or she makes sure the card is authenticated and also sees to it that the card gets mailed. Relying on the

station's promise to do it is usually a no-win situation which means the entire effort goes down the drain.

The John Alden technique is a bit like the tentative report. It should be used only in cases of extreme need. Just as it's better to be one hundred percent sure of yourself before sending a report, it's also more satisfying to have gotten the reply direct and on your own. But there are exceptional situations when no other answer seems feasible and that's the time to go looking for third party help.

Most Wanted List

This technique doesn't involve taking any specific action directed against the offending station. But it's a good ploy nonetheless— one you use on yourself.

After a number of attempts to verify a tough one and nothing to show for your trouble but failure and an education in what doesn't work, the listener often becomes discouraged. For some, the longer the attempts go on the deeper the irritation and the more desired the QSL becomes.

In such cases you can take a step towards bringing those tough replies closer to resolution. Take as many as ten of the especially tough ones and create an FBI-like most wanted list. Place the list near your receiver or on a bulletin board in the shack. Placing the list where you'll see it often will make you think about those stations more frequently. As a result you are more likely to come up with new things to try or at the very least will tend to send follow-ups or new reports more often than you might have otherwise.

You'll be surprised at how effective a most wanted list can be. It tends, by its very existance, to make one more determined to succeed, to think positive and that by itself can bring magical results.

As a further aid you can make up special tracking sheets for the terrible ten similar to the one described earlier. That way you'll know what techniques have been tried on the station and when your last effort was made. Incidently, some really nasty situations have required their own *page* of reporting history!

One further tip: when you do score with one of the terrible ten, don't replace it on the list. Just scratch it off and keep working. Watching the number of most wanteds go down in number is more encouraging than always having a full ten on your list. When the number is down to five or so you can replenish the list and start again.

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

QSL dE 3WT

Radio VIETNAM

Nº 3 Phan dinh Phung St.
SAIGON.

We confirm your reception of our station broadcasting from Saigon

on DECEMBER 27 1957 at 15.55 local time (GMT + 7)

on 30.76 m or 9754 kc/s — Radiated power 25000 w.

Many thanks for your report.

RADIO VIETNAM

VII - A Modicum of Miscellany

Beyond the logging, the writing and packaging of the original report, on past the follow-ups, the prepared cards and the pull-out-all-the-stops techniques, are still other points which we'll get into in this chapter, titled as it is because there is really no central theme.

No Letter Today

Stations vary widely in how difficult they are to QSL. It is, again, helpful to develop an ability to be able to "read" a station in advance on this point. If you have a general idea ahead of time as to whether a station will be an easy mark, rather difficult or next to impossible even before you send your first report you can make the necessary adjustments in your approach right from the beginning.

Generalizing here is about the best one can do but, in general, it can be said that the larger the station and the more developed the country in which it is located, the better the chances for a first time reply. Conversely, the smaller, more isolated the station, particularly if it is located in the third or even "fourth" world, the more likely you are to have difficulty in getting a verification.

Government stations are more likely to be first-time repliers than are private stations. Stations run by religious organizations are usually good verifiers and so are stations in most communist countries. You can then assume you will have little difficulty in obtaining a reply from stations such as Radio Budapest, Radio Japan, Radio Sweden International, ELWA in Liberia, HCJB and so on. You can expect more difficulty with Radio Abidjan in the Ivory Coast, Radio Pyongyang and so on. And still more trouble can be expected from the many Indonesian regionals and a wide variety of stations in Latin America.

The majority of the world's shortwave broadcast stations fall into this middle area of semi-difficulty wherein two or three follow-ups become necessary. You might just as well plan on it right from the start.

Then there are stations scattered around the globe which rarely, if ever, respond to reception reports. They exist as an open challenge for the DX'er and his reporting skills.

The Eternal Question

Why don't some stations reply, or reply only rarely at best? Sometimes we know the answer but usually we're left to guess at the reason. The reception report writer has to try and find a way around an obstacle the size and shape of which he cannot measure!

There are always a few stations (Radio Botswana is the most famous of the current crop) which have definite and firm policies against verifying reception reports. In Botswana's case it is a matter of not having any particular interest in knowing they are heard beyond their own borders, coupled with the fact that for years they sorted through mailbags full of demanding reception reports which contained little or no data. This so irritated the

person in charge of issuing verifications that he turned off the QSL tap. But even here there have been one or two exceptions!

Some stations make the decision to adopt a no QSL policy because of funding cutbacks. Others are interested in reports only if they come from listeners living within their broadcast target areas; if you live outside that area you are out of luck—supposedly. Still others have been inundated with reports attempting to get verifications for every frequency on which the station operates. Multiply that by a few thousand reporters and imagine how you would feel about having to answer so much mail. It can reach mountainous proportions. There's a strong selling point in favor of the one-to-a-customer rule which some stations have instituted. In other words, don't be greedy unless you know the station wants to receive as many reports as possible.

Sometimes the lack of a reply is a matter of politics. The government of a country may virtually close that nation off from contact with the outside world, as was the case with Kampuchea and Equatorial Guinea a few years ago. Red tape can also be a problem. That was the situation with the Burma Broadcasting Service some twenty years ago. It literally took the approval of the Burmese equivalent of the U.S. Secretary of State just to issue one verification! What station manager would want to go to that kind of trouble for every report he received?

Longtime DX'ers will remember the famous Omar M. Omar of Radio Tanzania-Zanzibar who faithfully replied to every letter with a promise that the QSL matter was being worked on. But the verifications didn't arrive until years later after all manner of end-around and intercessionary techniques had tried and failed. And Omar was long gone when the opening finally came.

The opening up of the Chinese regionals was apparently the outgrowth of China's change in outlook toward the world after the death of Mao, although it coincided with an extensive and

high powered campaign by a handful of DX'ers seeking regional QSLs during the same period.

All of these are relatively isolated cases. More often than not the lack of a reply is due to something far more mundane. Like simple indifference. And that is one of the harder attitudes for the reporter to combat.

And it is always possible that your letter really was lost in the mails or that the reply from the station did not reach you. There's little more you can do in such situations except try again.

Sometimes, especially with the smaller outlets, it is a question of simply not having the time to answer every letter the station receives. Occasionally, for whatever the reason, one letter may strike a chord, spark an interest in the recipient and receive a response while all the other letters continue to be ignored. The station may not have the staff or the money to engage in QSL'ing. Some small stations don't even have a typewriter they can call their own, much less a printed letterhead.

Answering reception reports from a foreign country, particularly after having done so a few times, can soon get to be a boring, thankless job, to say nothing of the time it takes. Reception reports and QSLs are small potatoes when compared to the many problems some of these stations face in finding the wherewithal to simply stay in business and remain on the air. DX'ers should probably count themselves fortunate to receive as many replies as they do.

Once in awhile you may run into a station which simply doesn't believe their low power transmitter could be heard at such a great distance and is thus reluctant to confirm your report since they feel it was impossible for you to have heard the broadcast. That's a good time to send a tape of the reception.

Occasionally cases will arise where you have reported the correct, actual operating frequency when the station has slipped

off its normal channel. The station may not want to admit their transmitter is at fault or may believe that its equipment is working just fine, thank you, and it is you who are in error. Sometimes the reporter, suspecting this, shrugs off the few kiloHertz involved, plays the game the way the station seems to want it played, reports the assigned frequency and presto— one QSL in the mailbox!

Some believe part of the problem in verifying some of the new Peruvians which have come on the air in recent years may be that some of the stations may not yet have full licenses and their owners may be reluctant to confirm operation or operation on a particular frequency.

Reasons for the lack of a reply can be frustratingly simple too. Yours truly once made the error of reporting a frequency in Megahertz but typing the figure with a comma, making the frequency read out in kiloHertz. A long time later it was learned the station saw this as a reason for the report's being incorrect and thus sending no reply!

In some DX'ing circles complaints about the lack of a reply from a station are met jokingly with "Well, your report was obviously wrong!" And that unsettling possibility really can be the reason now and then.

Less Can Be Better

There is no question that after a few years of sending reception reports the listener has already spent a considerable amount of time and money on this never ending quest. Most wouldn't want to know how much they've spent over a decade or more of sending reception reports.

If your time or funds for report writing are restricted you can still enjoy QSL'ing, simply by taking a narrrower view. You might, for instance, place a power limitation on the stations you

One of HCJB's series of QSLs highlighting the indians of Ecuador.

report to and go after only those using ten kilowatts or less. You might seek out just the unusual, little known programs and transmissions such as AM outlets which are relayed on shortwave once per week or whatever it may be. You could collect only special commemorative QSL cards issued by stations to mark special events or important occasions in the history of the station, or QSLs in series such as those offered by HCJB.

You could concentrate only on a particular area of the world or focus on just one country which especially interests you. You could specialize in religious broadcasters, pirates, clandestines or all of the activity on a single part of the shortwave dial. There are any number of categories which, although the activity level is less than that of an all-inclusive approach, still keeps you in the QSL game and allows you to build up an interesting collection. Some listeners combine the two, in a sense. They'll seek to verify each country they log but not go beyond that unless the reception is in their particular special interest area.

Transmitter Sites

The largest shortwave broadcast DX club in the United States, the North American Shortwave Association, adopted a set of station-counting rules a number of years ago. These hold that stations are essentially transmitter sites. Thus, the Voice of America can be counted once for each transmitter site heard and verified. It is an approach to station counting which has been accepted fairly widely in the organized DX hobby, at least in North America. And it involves some special considerations with regard to QSL'ing.

QSL'ing transmitter sites negates a part of the "what is a QSL" discussion we had earlier. This is because a QSL from a

broadcaster who uses more than one site but does not indicate the site heard on the QSL leaves one with a verification having little meaning for station counting purposes under the NASWA guidelines. You might compare it to a QSL from ABC Contemporary Radio. It is essentially verifying a program service rather than a transmitter location. Things are made still more difficult since transmitter sites, frequencies and times don't always stay the same on shortwave and there are thus rather few instances where it is widely known that Radio Soandso's Saltflats site is always on 11.730. If it were, a siteless QSL for that frequency might be more readily accepted.

The belief is, then, that the transmitter site should be indicated on the QSL if the station has more than one site and the listener plans to count his replies from these multiple sites as separate stations. One has, here, a very good indication of what would happen if the date, time and frequency were required to be part of every QSL: nervous breakdown for station and listener alike!

Most stations will, if requested, put the transmitter site on the QSL. But there are instances when stations ignore, forget or refuse to comply with such a request. Radio Bangladesh, in confirming reception of its new Kabripur transmitter site to this writer, found the request amusing!

Normally reports for QSLs with transmitter sites on them should be directed to the station's main office, rather than trying to go through personnel at the site. Sometimes going direct can get around an anti-site QSL policy but once the word gets back to headquarters there's usually a crackdown. When you do choose to go direct to the site a prepared card is usually advisable.

When you do receive a siteless QSL, in spite of the fact that you requested that the site be put on the verification, try sending the QSL back to the station with a request that the site be added.

Stations are not used to getting their own QSLs returned to them and the shock value alone will often do the trick.

Stations such as Deutsche Welle which issue site QSLs only occasionally and then on a pre-planned, limited time basis, and the BBC which is famous for its no-data cards, represent special problems since they are normally not about to add a site to your card. About the only way around such problems is to have an inside angle, or to try writing to the actual transmitter site engineer with a prepared card, or to take the time to send enough

Dear Mr.Dexter,

This verifies your report on the reception of Radio Moscow's broadcast for North America

Date December 24, 1978

Time 01:07 - 01:20 GMT

Frequency 7.115 MHz via Ivano-Frankovsk

Best wishes from

RADIO MOSCOW

Подмосковный зимний день

Radio Moscow can sometimes be talked into placing sites on their QSL's.

reports so that you're seen as someone who may deserve this special treatment, or to catch a broadcast under unusual technical circumstances.

Sometimes, with Bulgaria and Vietnam currently, the station has a definite policy of not QSL'ing their transmitter sites or regional stations. In such cases there's little to be done except to keep trying now and then and hope that things will change in the future.

Little Bits

Stations sometimes offer a particular QSL card design or a series of them, perhaps even a certificate of some kind is issued for sending so many reports over a certain period or for hearing a special program or transmission. Pay attention to the requirements the station sets and follow directions.

If you have written to a station a number of times without receiving an answer, tell them how many letters you've sent them, even provide them with the dates they were mailed.

If you have heard and verified a large and impressive number of stations, especially within the country to which you are writing, give them the figures. You might even emphasize that "only two stations" (or whatever the number is in that country) haven't answered. You may embarrass them into answering.

Try using colored paper and envelopes. Some stores offer these in quantities as few as a single sheet. Color can help call attention to your report.

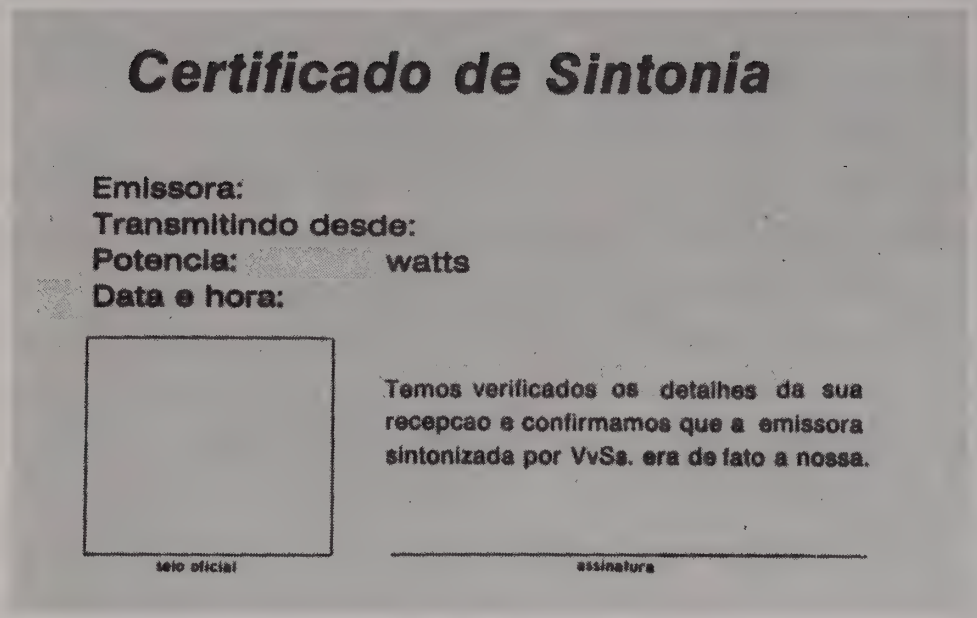
Educating Stations

Sometimes they just don't know what you want. This is most often true with new stations just coming on the air, not being widely received and thus not getting many reports. If you are writing to a station and suspect this problem exists you can include a few lines in your letter explaining what shortwave listening is all about and what verifications are. Stamp collecting makes a good comparison. A few DX'ers have had explanations of DX'ing and QSL'ing translated into Spanish and they include these as separate sheets with reports to Latin American stations. You can use such opportunities to urge that *all* correct reports be answered, thereby doing your fellow listener a good turn in the process.

Some years ago DX'er Ralph W. Perry came up with the "Certificado de Sintonia" (Certificate of Listening) concept as an alternate to the use of such terms as QSL and verification. He used the terminology on pre-printed prepared cards destined for Latin America. The approach apparently struck some responsive chords because several stations now issue their own QSLs using the phrase, and now respond more readily to reports than they formerly did. The Latin psyche seemed to resist replying to a letter that said "I heard you" with another saying "Yes, you did." But the idea of issuing you a certificate apparently made sense, even though the two are really the same thing, dressed in different costumes.

Dear Comrade

What about reporting to communist countries? While occasionally there are cases of a mom or dad who refuse to let communist propaganda into the house, a more common (but not very) question is whether such correspondence can get you into


Certificado de Sintonia
Emissora:
Transmitindo desde:
Potencia: watts
Data e hora:
Temos verificados os detalhes da sua recepcao e confirmamos que a emissora sintonizada por VvSs. era de fato a nossa.
selo oficial
assinatura

A prepared card using the "Certificado de Sintonia" approach.

trouble with your government. And naturally much depends on the government under which you live.

We cannot cite any specific cases where a U.S. listener has gotten into trouble for writing to communist countries. After all, if Jane Fonda can broadcast over the Voice of Vietnam then Joe Listener shouldn't have problems if he writes to the Voice of Vietnam. We've heard rumors that on one or two occasions in the past American listeners have had visits from the FBI but apparently once things were explained there was no problem. Persons who must submit to security checks in order to obtain a sensitive government job may be on slightly thinner ice. Some listeners who hold government positions just don't bother writing to communist stations, simply as a precaution. Others have been told there is no problem as long as it doesn't develop into a continuous correspondence to one particular country.

During the anti-CIA congressional witch hunts some years ago this author discovered that the CIA had a "file" on him. It consisted simply of copies of two envelopes from Radio Moscow which had been sent back in the 1950's. So reception reporting can at least get you noticed.

Neither the information nor past experience in this area is enough to allow any real conclusions to be reached other than the suggestion that you take a common sense approach. If you are in a sensitive job or are applying for one, check things out. Don't hide your hobby. Ask about policies. Be up front and above board. We suspect there is far more smoke than fire here.

Preservation

The days when QSL collectors kept their accumulation of cards and letters in desk drawers, shoeboxes or tacked to bulletin boards seem to be on the wane. More and more QSL enthusiasts are recognizing the value of their collections, at least to themselves, and are taking the trouble to properly display the results of their efforts.

The most popular way of doing this is with three ring notebooks and three hole punched plastic protector sheets. Photo corners hold the cards in place, folded over adhesive tape keeps pennants and stickers from falling out. Letters can be either folded to fit the standard 8 1/2 by 11 inch page or trimmed down to fit. Some collectors are now using plastic pocket sheets in which the ring holes are on a border. That in turn allows the entire page size to be used and often eliminates the need to make the letter size conform to the available space.

It's also becoming more common for those with fairly large collections to keep them in three ring books categorized by continent or, in cases where enough QSLs have been received, by individual countries. Label maker strips can be used on the

binding to indicate the continent or country or the books can be gold embossed. If possible it's a nice touch to use the same style and color of books for the entire collection.

QSL card albums are commercially available but these have the disadvantage of only being able to hold cards so you are still left with having to accommodate the letters and over-sized cards as well. Your collection then has to be kept in books of mismatched size.

Eventually everyone ends up with a number of duplicate cards, stations that for one reason or another have been verified twice. This overflow can be used to decorate a shack wall, be placed around a world map or go under glass on your operating desk.

Once you have the cards or letters in albums you can type up file folder labels for each, showing station name and reception information. These can be applied to the outside of the protector sheet in the case of letters or the black inner page below the QSL cards.

Security

By the time you are a year or two into the QSL collecting hobby you can count on having at least one or two veries which are irreplaceable. The station may have gone off the air or the style of the card has changed. More and more listeners express some concern about protecting their collections and there are a couple of ways of doing this. A small, relatively inexpensive safe might be purchased to hold the really rare replies. Or you can rent a safe deposit box at your bank.

Protecting larger collections is a bigger problem. You might make photocopies of everything and keep them in a secure place in case the originals are destroyed, or do it the other way

around. A more expensive proposition is microfilming, with the film then stored in a lock box.

You may feel the additional expense and bother isn't worth it and you would have a lot of company. Still, how would you feel if your collection was stolen or destroyed?

After You've Gone

Some DX'ers express a concern about what will happen to their collections once they are DX'ing from that big shack in the sky. Others couldn't care less! But enough do seem concerned to express the hope here that one day the organized hobby may do something about this question. This might be in the form of some sort of QSL Museum or a permanent photographic record covering all the stations and QSL types obtained over the years. The museum might be part of an old radio museum or broadcasting history museum. So far, though, there are no plans for anything along these lines. In the meantime some fine collections are being lost.

Keeping Current

Part of the formula for success in QSL'ing is the need to stay up on what's happening in the field, to know your enemy whether it's one you are currently battling or one you may encounter one day in the future. Keep a close eye on the QSL columns of any club bulletins you receive. If you haven't yet verified the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation, for example, you should know in advance that they are sticklers for very detailed programming information and want four International Reply Coupons with your report. Reading QSL

columns regularly— and the more the better— provides you with information you can turn into QSLs later on.

As we have noted earlier you should take action when you see that someone has received a reply from a station you are waiting on. Keep a list of verification signers and address changes of stations you may not even have logged yet. You'll be glad you don't have to search through three dozen bulletins to find the information you need when you do log the station and are ready to send a report.

Staying up to date on the QSL'ing picture also means being aware of what stations are not replying very often. Take note if you know that several people have heard a station but none are receiving replies. That means that when you report to the station you already know it may be a tough nut to crack and you have the opportunity right from the start to dress up your report or apply special techniques. It won't work every time but it will pay off often enough to make the time you spent becoming acquainted with the situation wisely invested.

The Association of North American Radio Clubs (ANARC) QSL Committee is an on-going effort to pursuade difficult stations to improve their verification policies. If you are having trouble with a particular station this committee is interested in knowing about your problem. However, you should be sure that the difficulty with a given station is not one which you alone are suffering. Don't lodge a complaint with the committee if your lack of a reply seems to be one of those isolated "why me?" cases which everyone runs into— when everyone seems to get an answer but you. Additional work on your part will eventually bring your reply as well.

It is our opinion that the lists of stations the committee reports it is working on contain many stations which really shouldn't be on the list at all. So don't add to it further. Be sure you have a solid, legitimate complaint which many others share. The committee will then contact the station on behalf of all

listeners. Of course, there are no guarantees of success. The committee may not be able to turn things around, but sometimes they do.

The ANARC QSL Committee can be contacted in care of Edward J. Pyatt, Chairman, Morehouse College, Box 116, Atlanta, Georgia 30314.

The European DX Council publishes an annual list of stations which have replied to reception reports throughout the previous year, indicating the type of reply (card or letter) and the number of replies reported by members of EDXC member clubs. The publication can help you get an idea of who is replying and, by the number of replies being received, provide a very general indication of the difficulty level of a particular station.

You will have to guess at the number of people who sent reports and received nothing back but, even so, the EDXC list is occasionally useful as a reference. Inquire about costs and availability by writing to the European DX Council, P.O. Box 4, St. Ives, Huntingdon, Cambs, England PE17 4FE. Enclose three IRCs for a reply.

Our *World Broadcast Station Address Book* assigns a grade to each station listed to provide the user with an idea of how difficult each is to QSL.

Making Your Own Luck

There is simply no explaining the fact that a dozen DX'ers may receive a reply from a station and your report, of equal quality, is ignored. Everyone has this happen now and then and the reasons can't even be guessed at. Many charge it off to luck, good or bad as the case may be. But luck is often made. Luck is the payoff for someone who has shown determination, patience, persistance and the proper attitudes towards QSL

collecting and reception report writing. If you dabble in it, if you take it on a hit and miss, catch-as-catch-can basis then that's the sort of luck you'll have. It won't be as good as it could be. You'll do OK with the bigger outlets but the rare ones will all too often escape your net.

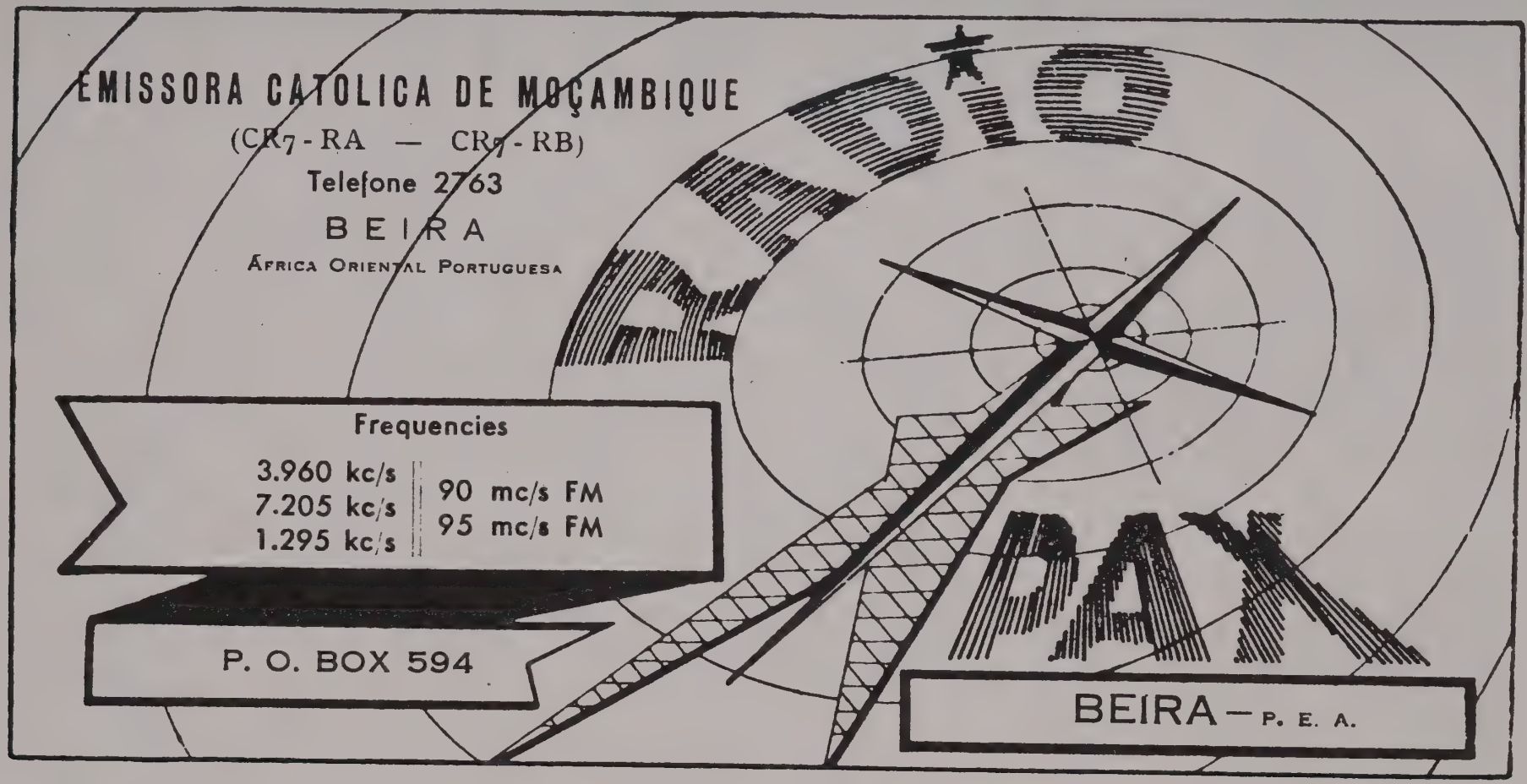
Another important element in developing a proper and successful QSL attitude is creativity. That, of course, doesn't mean padding reports or reporting things you never heard! It means, rather, using your imagination, your creative powers to develop new approaches and techniques which you can apply to the stations which are causing you grief. And there are as many approaches as the mind can imagine. Most are of such a nature as to be effective only once or twice per station, assuming they work at all. And the widespread use of them by QSL seekers only dilutes such techniques and soon makes them useless to anyone. Like your choice of a receiver or your hobby standards such obscure techniques are just as likely to be uniquely yours. Your individual situation may provide possibilities and approaches someone else cannot duplicate.

One important approach in applying your creative juices to QSL'ing is to try and put yourself into the station manager's boots. Try to get inside his head. The Certificado de Sintonia approach resulted from just this kind of thinking. In other words, try to tailor your report to the station and its situation. Make the person who reads your report feel he wants to reply to you. If your report is one that looks like all the rest it is likely to be treated just as the rest are— answered automatically with a standard reply or not answered at all.

Remember that there is no such thing as a "black" or unverifiable station. Many might argue that point and we might even agree with them (in a whisper) but that's not the point. The attitude that any station can be verified is essential in creating the proper mindset for QSL'ing success. The really tough station may require you to pull out every trick in your magician's trunk.

It may take years of effort, tens of dollars and, yes even a certain amount of luck now and then.

But if you develop the right attitude, if you are determined enough, if you are creative, if you refuse to give in you can almost always come out a winner when others have failed.


EMISSORA CATOLICA DE MOÇAMBIQUE
(CR7 - RA — CR7 - RB)
Telefone 2763
BEIRA
AFRICA ORIENTAL PORTUGUESA
RADIO
Frequencies
3.960 kc/s
7.205 kc/s
1.295 kc/s
90 mc/s FM
95 mc/s FM
P. O. BOX 594
BEIRA — P. E. A.

VIII - OTHER BANDS, OTHER VOICES

Although we have focused this book in that area, the QSL Game is not played exclusively on a board labeled "shortwave broadcast." Listeners involved with monitoring other forms of electronic communication play the game as well. With some exceptions most of the techniques used by shortwave broadcast listeners are also applicable to other forms of monitoring. Each type does have some special considerations of its own to examine. Before doing that however, there are two kinds of shortwave broadcasting stations which don't fit completely into the normal molds and these special voices also require a few lines.

Pirates

While the reporting elements are the same for pirate stations as for any legitimate broadcaster there are a couple of approach points of which you should be aware. Most pirate broadcasters take reception reports through an intermediary, usually announcing the address of this middleman on the air. The reason barely needs mentioning but for those new to the hobby it's to keep as much distance as possible between the station and the broadcast authority in that country. No pirate dares go on

the air and tell the Federal Communications Commission where to find him!

Three units of first class postage should be included with reports to a domestic U.S. pirate operating through an intermediary. One is for the go-between to use to send the report to the station, one for the pirate to send the verie back to the middleman and the third to get it from middleman to you.

Occasionally, though not so often now as in the past, pirates will simply send verifications to those who have reported receiving the station in the loggings sections of club bulletins.

Clandestines

The main problem in trying to verify clandestines is usually the absense of an adequate address to which to mail a report. Too often there is no place from which to even start a QSL quest. When this happens the listener is faced with two choices: he can put the report aside and hope that an address will eventually surface, or he can join in the hunt, do some research and perhaps find an address for a sponsoring organization. The latter path involves an often tedious, usually frustrating trek through the writing of any number of inquiry letters or making exploratory phone calls, all with no guarantee of success even should an address be turned up!

Where a clandestine address does exist it is often that of an intermediary or perhaps an office of the organization which operates or is affiliated with the station. In any event it is a good idea to use the name of the backing organization on the envelope rather than the name of the station. If only the station's name is known but it must be contacted at some other address, abbreviate the station name or use its initials. This isn't necessary in all cases and one simply has to decide on a case by case basis when to do what.

Usually it is a good idea to include a prepared card with your reports to clandestine stations.

Amateur QSL'ing

For the listener who seeks an unlimited number of stations to verify in a given category, ham band listening provides a mother lode!

The standard format for reporting to an amateur radio operator is the SWL (shortwave listener) card. These cards allow room for an address plus information covering the usual reporting elements - the basics of time, data, frequency or meter band, signal strength and readability and who the ham was calling or was in contact with at the time. SWL cards are available from any number of specialized printers whose advertisements can be found in ham radio and listener magazines. Write for some samples or a catalog. You can also design your own card and get your local printer to produce it for you.

Veteran ham band DX'ers make it a point to cover several contacts in their reports, rather than just one. This provides further proof that the ham's transmission was received and shows you have an above average interest. Some use a folder type card which allows for more reporting space. See the section on postal matters for more on this type of card.

The ham band listener has three routes he can take in sending his report. Mailing the card direct to the ham is usually the fastest. It is also the most expensive due to the fact that most reports will be overseas airmail and will require return postage in the form of IRCs or mint stamps. Addresses of amateur stations can be found in the *Radio Amateur's Callbook,* issued annually in both domestic and foreign editions and available at practically all ham and shortwave listener outlets.

Route Two, which isn't always available, is through the ham's QSL manager if he has one. In order to save having to handle a great number of cards and allow more time for operating many DX stations have arranged to have someone else handle their QSL'ing chores for them. Many of these QSL managers are located in the United States so that, for U.S. listeners anyway, the postal costs are cut to a minimum. The DX columns of ham radio magazines and ham-run DX newsletters contain up to date information on who is managing for what station.

Other sources of QSL manager information include the monthly lists published by Lars E. Bohm, Stora Angesby, S-59190 Motala, Sweden. Another list is available from Hiromichi Katsurashima, 5-2236-33 Iriya, Zama City, Kanagawa, Japan. Still another is put out by Jan and Jay O'Brien, P. O. Box 700, Rio Linda, CA 95673 and from Arthur Maurer, Breim Weinsenstein 9, 6602 Dudweiler, Federal Republic of Germany. Send a couple of IRCs with an inquiry for current price information.

The least expensive and longest route through which ham band listening reports can be sent is via the QSL bureaus. The amateur radio organizations in most countries maintain these bureaus which both receive incoming cards from other bureaus and dispatch outgoing cards in the same manner. Ham band listeners may use this system too, or at least a part of it. The U.S. amateur organization, the American Radio Relay League, does not accept outgoing listener cards. But there are several privately operated bureaus which are available for both ham and listener use and their advertisements can usually be found in the ham radio magazines. Cards, usually a minimum of twenty five at a time, may be sent via these private bureaus at a cost of about five cents each.

Incoming cards destined for listeners in the U.S. and which come through the ARRL bureau are sent to the ARRL's SWL

card bureau which is run on a voluntary basis by Mike Witkowski, 4206 Nebel Street, Stevens Point, WI 54481. If you are an active ham band listener sending reception reports you should maintain at least a couple of business size self addressed stamped envelopes on file with him. As soon as cards are received for you they'll be forwarded.

Going via the bureaus can take a very long time, sometimes even years. But if you appreciate the cost savings and can adjust to the long wait involved, can adapt mentally to mailing out cards and pretty much forgetting about them, bureaus are a great way to go, especially when you cannot locate a QSL manager.

No matter which route you use to send out cards it is important to have some sort of call letters you can claim as your own - even if you make them up yourself. Cards frequently come into the bureaus with nothing more on them to indicate who they're for than the call of the ham station or the monitoring call of the listener. If you don't have such a call there are a couple of places where you can get one.

The WDX monitor call registration program is run by Hank Bennett, P. O. Box 3333, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034. Another is available through CRB Research, P.O. Box 56, Commack, NY 11725. Send a self-addressed envelope for full details.

Utility Stations

Like hams and shortwave broadcast stations, a report to a utility outlet requires the basic data of time, frequency, a signal report and something offered as proof of your reception. But here is where things get quite different. The one area in which you should not be very specific is in the content of a utility transmission. Most utility stations are engaged in direct contact with another utility, and while there is no way to prevent a third party (you) from tuning in, there are laws against repeating what

you hear, even repeating it back to the people who sent the information in the first place.

Therefore, if your reception covered a two-way contact your description of the transmission should be limited to just the name or names of the stations contacted. If you hear test transmissions (markers) or general calls you can report the word-for-word text of those. But don't include text or even a general description of the content of two-way contacts in your report.

Unfortunately there is no one book which contains all of the addresses of utility stations, the field is simply too large and varied. Depending upon how widespread your utility listening and QSL'ing interests are it may be necessary to purchase several books in order to have a sufficient bank of address information at hand.

The listener who wants to collect replies from utility stations must rely more heavily on the use of prepared cards since many utility stations don't have their own QSL cards and may not wish to take the time to write a verification letter either. You will probably use prepared cards frequently enough to warrant having them commercially printed or developing a means for creating them yourself with speed and ease.

Medium Wave

Medium wave or broadcast band stations run the same as shortwave broadcast stations insofar as levels of difficulty are concerned. Some are almost automatic with their replies, some are extremely difficult.

For the U.S. listener there is an advantage in having a smaller per-report cost involved in reports to the domestic stations, but that is soon offset by the much larger number of stations being reported.

Return postage in the form of a first class stamp should always be included, with IRCs or mint stamps sent to stations outside the U.S.

Many domestic stations are, like their counterparts on shortwave, small in staff size as well as budget and are far more concerned with earning a living than in replying to mail from long distance listeners.

Station addresses can be found in the *Broadcasting Yearbook*. It is a very expensive volume so you may want to just use the copy at your library. Just as good and a lot less expensive is the National Radio Club's *Domestic Log* which also includes Canadian stations. For current price information send a self-addressed stamped envelope to NRC Publication Center, c/o Ken Chatterton, P. O. Box 164, Mansville, NY 13661. Addresses of foreign medium wave stations can be found in the *World Radio TV Handbook*.

Fortunately, if you live within the country, the desperate QSL seeker can always telephone the station if necessary. And there are certainly more opportunities for intercession techniques. The listener may even occasionally find himself visiting a city where he has an unverified station or two. The possibilities in such instances don't even need to be stated!

Broadcast band reception reports should pay less attention to song titles and far more attention to other points. Most stations keep no record of the music they play, but they do keep lists of commercials, public service announcements, promotional announcements and so on. Mentions of things you may have heard on a community bulletin board or in local newscasts, slogans and such also help to serve as proof you heard the station, so try and include as much of this kind of information as possible.

Again you need the basics and as much good program detail as possible. Television is a lot more difficult in that it is useless to tell a station you caught them carrying "Dynasty." You'll have to catch local commercials, ID slides and the content of local newscasts or other local programming.

The FM station (and some TV stations now, too) may be interested in knowing whether their signal was strong enough to produce stereo reception. The degree of fading may also be of some interest.

The TV DX'er, if he is set up to take pictures of the distant station as it appears on the screen, can always send an extra print along with his report as added proof of what he saw. Photos make attractive additions to the albums of QSLs too. Catching the DX on one's VCR practically eliminates the need to send reception reports for some DX'ers.

TV and FM station addresses are given in the *Broadcasting Yearbook*. Most television stations are well enough known in their city of license so that call letters, city, state and zip code will normally get your report to the station without using a more complete address.

While it does not contain addresses as such, the *FM Atlas and Station Directory,* published by FM Atlas, Adolph, MN 55701 is an excellent guide to DX'ing the FM band and can at least help you pinpoint the city of location.

IX - EXALTED CARRIERS

Although much maligned by QSL seekers whose entire outlook on life often seems to depend on what the mailman brings each day, the United States Postal Service, its offices, clerks and carriers do provide us with a good and fairly reliable service, on the whole. More blame for lost reports and QSLs should probably be aimed in the direction of certain postal services in some other countries.

There is a decided difference between mailing letters intended for domestic delivery and those destined for a foreign country. The great majority of the world's nations are members of the International Postal Union, a body which sets up general guidelines and provides some coordination. Each country, however, makes its own rules and regulations regarding the type and content of mail it will handle and the services it will provide. Some countries do not offer the range of services which others do, or will apply certain restrictions which others will not.

The United States Postal Service has its own set of rules and regulations governing mail coming into this country from abroad. The point to remember here is that, with respect to mail going to other countries, the USPS doesn't make all the rules. It must follow the rules set down by each individual nation for incoming mail.

Knowing some of these general rules and being aware of the available services in your own country can save you time and money and enable your local post office to do a better job on

your behalf. With that in mind let's examine some of the ins and outs of mailing overseas and look at some of the services you can put to use.

International Reply Coupons

As we discussed earlier, IRCs are theoretically good in all member countries of the International Postal Union, which is most of them. The postal clerk must rubber stamp the IRC in the space provided on the *left* hand side of the coupon. IRCs received here from foreign countries are exchangeable for thirty cents worth of U.S. postage. Incidently, your local post office is *not required* to have IRCs available. Although most of them do stock IRCs, many keep only a small supply on hand. The USPS instructs local post offices to have a supply available, *if a*

UNION POSTALE UNIVERSELLE **COUPON-RÉPONSE INTERNATIONAL** C 22

Ce coupon est échangeable dans tous les pays de l'Union postale universelle contre un ou plusieurs timbres-poste représentant l'affranchissement minimal d'une lettre ordinaire, expédiée à l'étranger par voie de surface.

Empreinte du timbre du pays d'origine (date facultative)	Prix de vente (indication facultative)	Timbre du bureau qui effectue l'échange
GENEVA WI MAY 17 1984 USPO LAKE	65 cents	

An IRC, correctly stamped.

demand exists. Coupons issued prior to 1975 are no longer redeemable.

Letters

The minimum size letter (envelope) which may be mailed overseas is three and a half by five and a half inches. The maximum is twenty four inches in length with a combined length, width and thickness of no more than thirty six inches. A surcharge is applied to letters of one ounce or less that do not have a height to length ratio between 1 to 1.3 and 1 to 2.5, or exceed eleven and a half inches in length, six and one-eighth inches in height or a quarter inch in thickness.

Postcards

The minimum mailable postcard size is five and a half by three and a half inches, the maximum size is six by four and a half inches. Cards which are not printed by the United States Postal Service or are not standard picture postcards should have the designation "postcard" on the face. Double cards or folded-over cards can be mailed only within an envelope. Mailing rates for postcards are, of course, cheaper than those for letters.

Addressing

The address should be typed, clearly written or printed on the right hand half of the face of the envelope. Both the name of the city and the name of the country should be in capital letters, with the country name occupying the last line. Letters destined

to Canada may include the postal code as the last line or part of the last line (i.e. with the country name) in the address.

Addresses not written in English should include English translations for both the city and country of destination.

Registration

Letters to most countries can be sent via registered mail which normally requires that the addressee or his agent sign for the letter before taking delivery. This service, although rather expensive, is often valuable from the standpoint of calling attention to your letter. It should be noted that in some countries (the USSR, Yugoslavia and Poland, among others) a registered letter is often signed for by someone at the local postal authority, not necessarily presented to the addressee or his agent for signature.

Registered letters should be securely sealed. However they should not be sealed with adhesive tape all along the length of the flap. Room has to be left for the postal clerk to place rubber stamp imprints along this length. Envelopes with self-seal flaps or those envelopes which may appear to the clerk to have been opened and then resealed will not be accepted for registering. Currently it costs $3.10 to send a registered letter overseas.

Return Receipts

An additional 60 cents allows you to request a return receipt for your registered letter. This receipt is returned to you by the delivering post office, signed by the addressee or his agent and lets you know that your letter did, indeed, arrive. Another advantage of the return receipt is that you can include this with

your next follow-up report to let the station know that you know they received your last letter.

Confirmation of Delivery

A letter sent registered mail also gives the sender the option of requesting a Confirmation of Delivery within one year of having sent the registered letter. At present this service costs $3.75 and you must present your original registration receipt to the postal clerk and file an inquiry form as well.

Restricted Delivery

The use of this service allows you to specify that delivery of your letter be restricted to a specific person, in person. It requires you to opt for a return receipt and currently costs an extra dollar.

Special Delivery

Also called Exprés, this service is available in most member countries of the IPU and, where it is available, can serve to deliver your report fast and with flourish. Costs vary.

Certificate of Mailing

For the current sum of 40 cents you can request one of these. The certificate constitutes proof of having mailed the item. At the relatively low price you have to do most of the work yourself— fill out the certificate, affix the necessary

stamps and then present it to the clerk for cancellation of the stamps. These certificates must be purchased when you mail the item, you can't decide that you want one later on.

International Express Mail

It's faster, but it's not available to all countries. Check with your local post office for price and availability.

Aerogrammes

These are single sheets which, when folded in accordance with the instructions printed on the face and then sealed create an all-in-one letter and envelope. While aerogrammes, sometimes called air letters, are a shade cheaper than ordinary letter mail postage rates, the big disadvantage is that nothing can be enclosed. They do have a use in correspondence or for briefer reception reports or letters to stations where you know return postage is not required or when you feel that extras sent with the report are not necessary. The aerogramme has postage pre-printed on the face.

Small Packets

Some listeners use the small packet rate to mail cassette recordings of reception. It's cheaper. But, like so many other post office services, just as soon as you think you've found a way around the system that can save you a little money, you discover the catch involved. In this case it's that you cannot include letters. Small packet service is not available to Cuba, Kampuchea or North Korea.

Postage Due

Once in a great while a listener will receive a letter from overseas with no postage on the envelope or an inadequate amount applied. The listener's local post office may try to collect the amount owed from the person to whom the letter is addressed and normally succeed.

If you encounter this situation check the card or envelope carefully. Look for a rubber stamped "T" on the envelope, followed by a fractioned number. The number represents the amount owed over the surface postal rate in the United States. This indication must be affixed by the Receiving U.S. Exchange Office when the letter arrives in this country. It is not a procedure which can legally be handled by your local post office. So if the proper designations aren't on the card or envelope you have every right to the correspondence and you aren't required to pay the amount of postage due.

Other Sortings

Remember that more than one rate applies in international mailing. In the United States the rates per half ounce, up to two ounces, are five cents less for airmail to the Caribbean, Central America, Colombia and Venezuela. Postal clerks who do not handle much mail destined for overseas, or are new on the job may not remember this and try to charge you the normal rates for the rest of the world. Domestic mailing rates apply to letters and cards mailed to Canada and Mexico.

A few countries are fussy when it comes to accepting mail which does not refer to that country by its proper name. A letter addressed to "Radio Beijing, Beijing, China" is sure to come

back to you since the Chinese insist that mail bear the full and proper name "People's Republic of China." Mail addressed to "Hong Kong, China" will be returned from Hong Kong as well, as Hong Kong is not yet a part of China.

To be on the safe side, the best procedure is to use the full and proper name of the country in question, except when you've had previous experience in mailing to a particular country and have experienced no problem. A letter going to London, for instance, can designate the country as England, Great Britain or the United Kingdom with no fuss raised. Mail to Luanda, on the other hand, might be better addressed as "People's Republic of Angola" rather than simply as "Angola."

Sometimes the listener will want to send currency with the report, either as a small bribe or to cover the station's return postage costs. Most countries have rules against using the mails to transmit foreign currency into the country. Some even prohibit the mailing of mint or even cancelled stamps. We know of no instances where the sending of such items has caused a problem but the rules are on the books.

Whether you are sending reception reports, cassette recordings or want to send bees to Radio Finland International you might find it useful to have a publication entitled the *International Mail Manual* in your library. This is the guide the post office itself uses to check on what can and cannot be done on an individual country basis. It contains general rules and services and a country-by-country breakdown on what each will allow and what services are offered by each postal authority. The book is expensive, with a current price of $34 including updates, but for the really serious QSL collector and frequent user of the international mails the book can provide useful insights and, as such, may be a good investment. It is available from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, North Capitol and "H" Streets NW, Washington, DC

20401. If you live in a city with a Government Printing Office book store they may have it in stock or can order it for you.

Those with thinner wallets should ask their local post office for a free poster-size handout entitled "International Postal Rates and Fees" which is a quick and easy guide to size and weight limits, services offered, costs and so on.

Remember too, that the U.S. Postal Service is set up to process complaints if you have any. Ask your postmaster for the necessary forms if you have a particular problem.

Finally, readers living outside the United States should check with their post office for any brochures or other printed information that postal authority may make available and then become acquainted with the costs and services offered.

FORCES BROADCASTING SERVICE

MIDDLE EAST

~~No. 1 FBS TRIPOLI~~
~~No. 2 FBS~~ NAIROBI

HQ FBS CANAL ZONE
~~EGYPT~~

~~No. 4 FBS CYPRUS~~
No. 5 FBS BENGHAZI

TRANSMITTER TYPE... RCA ET 4750 ...

AERIAL... λ/2 dipole ...

RADIATED POWER... 7500 ...WATTS

Thank you for your report concerning our transmissions on ... 60 ...Meters ... 4930 ...k/cs covering the period ... 0500 ...hrs to ... 0600 GMT ...hrs on ... 29th DECEMBER ... 19 55. The contents of your report have been checked with our Station Log for that day and found correct. May we take this opportunity of wishing you good luck and happy listening during 1956.. TECHNICAL OFFICER

£5.5.0.

PS/8148/GHQP MELF 17/1,000/3-53

X - POSTSCRIPTS

How do you measure your QSL'ing success? That should be easy. Isn't it how many replies you get against how many you don't? Well, yes and no. In the beginning when most listeners are logging and reporting the more easily heard and verified stations, the reply percentage is normally pretty good. But even assuming that good quality reports are sent, the reply percentage will drop as you progress to the more difficult stations. That may be no ill reflection on the quality of your reports but simply one of the hazards of the game.

Once you have progressed past the foreign language barrier and are reporting to stations in order to verify *stations*, rather than to stations in order to verify *countries*, things change. The game really begins to get interesting!

Past this point you can consider yourself as doing quite well if you get thirty percent replies from your first reports and another thirty percent back after your first follow-ups. From there the increases begin to fall off. But continued effort should have you up at around the seventy five to eighty percent rate. Anything higher than that means you are doing extremely well indeed!

But no matter what your overall verified percentage works out to you should never be totally satisfied with your reporting techniques. Make it a practice to re-examine them every now and then. Refine, improve, adjust, experiment. Remember that no one technique offers all of the answers. All of the answers

haven't even been discovered yet and probably never will be. A given method may work beautifully on one station and prove a total dud when tried on the next.

As we've mentioned before it is vitally important to develop the conviction that any station can be verified, given enough time, enough effort and the right approach. We'll admit that, realistically, there probably are a few which can't be verified but never mind that. Forget it was even mentioned! You must *really believe* that one day you will be successful in obtaining an answer from a station which is now causing you sleepless nights. The attitude is sometimes difficult to achieve, and more often difficult to maintain consistently, particularly after the tenth follow-up to Radio Huayllay has gone unanswered. But the approach is nonetheless essential. Once you let yourself start to believe you are never going to verify Radio Huayllay you'll eventually quit trying. And then you probably never will get a reply.

Going hand in hand with this attitude are the characteristics of determination and persistance. Like the bulldog that won't let go of the stick, you must latch onto that logging and promise yourself that you will never give up on the effort to verify that station no matter how long it takes, no matter how hopeless things seem. It is not an easy thing to do.

Determined QSL seekers have been known to spend a decade or longer trying to verify a particular station. During that time reports and follow-ups into the twenties, thirties and forties are not uncommon. That is the price you have to be willing to pay, at least on rare occasions. But, ah, the celebration when the victory is won!

Each individual listener makes the choice on what QSLs mean to him or her, decides how determined, how involved he or she wants to become. But the greater the challenge taken on, the greater the victory. And, after all, QSL'ing would lose much of its fascination if every station automatically verified every

report on the first attempt. Where's the challenge in that? How much fun would it be if you heard every station you tuned for the first time you tried?

In a twisted way, then, we should thank the Radio Botswana's and Radio Jaen's of the world for, without their kind, the QSL game wouldn't be nearly as much fun.

The real secret to successful QSL'ing isn't some special enclosure we haven't told you about. It's not a magic paragraph inserted into reception reports. It isn't locked away in some Jack Benny-like vault, accessible only to a privileged few. The secret is largely one of attitude, of persistence, of creativity, of determination.

Do your best job on every report and never, never give up.

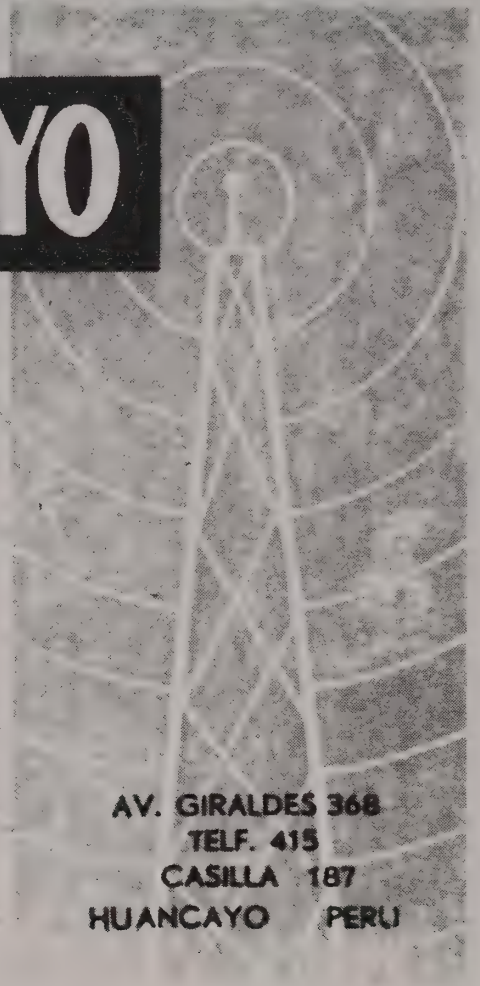
Good luck!

RADIO HUANCAYO

LA VOZ DEL CENTRO DEL PERU

OC X 4D — 1470 — KC — ONDA LARGA

OA X 4P — 5950 — KCLS — ONDA CORTA

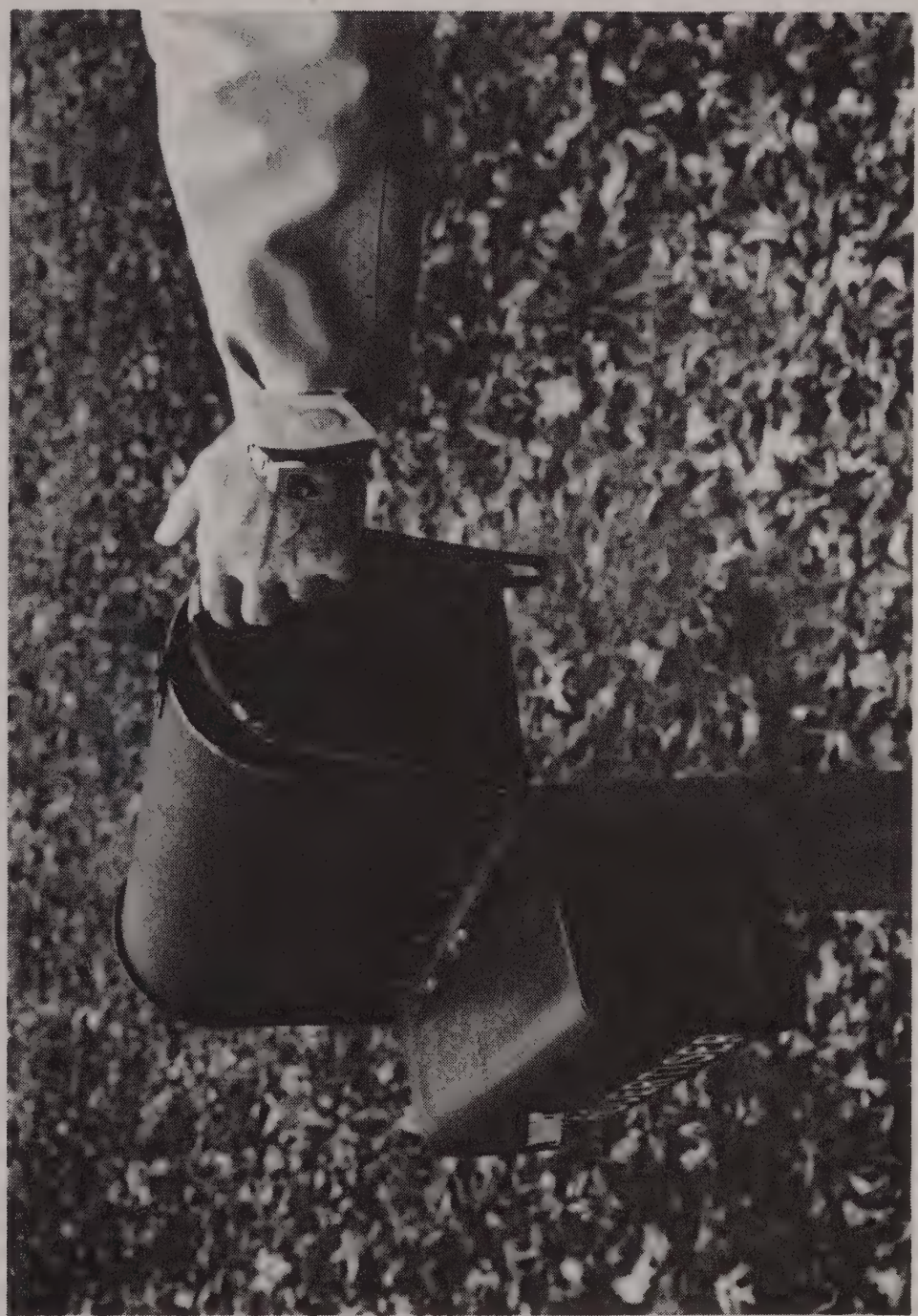


AV. GIRALDES 368
TELF. 415
CASILLA 187
HUANCAYO PERU

XI - REPORTING AND QSL'ING ABBREVIATIONS

Adm.	-	Administratador
A.P.	-	Apartado Postal (P.O. Box)
Apt.	-	Apartado (postal)
Av.	-	Avenida (avenue)
B.P.	-	Boite Postal (P. O. Box)
Ca.	-	Calle (street)
CC	-	Correo Central
Cas.	-	Casilla (box)
CE	-	Chief Engineer
cd	-	card
C.P.	-	Caixa Postal (P.O. Box)
CPO	-	Central Post Office
Cra.	-	carrera (street)
D.F.	-	Districto Federal (federal district)
DG	-	Director General
Dir.	-	Director
Edif.	-	edificio (building)
EiC	-	engineer in charge
Esq.	-	esquina (corner)
f/d	-	full data reply
f/up	-	follow-up report
Gen.	-	gerente (manager)
GPO	-	General Post Office

Ing.	-	ingeniero (engineer)
Int. Rel.	-	International Relations
IRC	-	International Reply Coupon
Jln.	-	jalan (street)
Jr.	-	jiron (street)
ltr.	-	letter
ms	-	mint stamps
n/d	-	no data reply
OIC	-	officer in charge
Pav.	-	pavimiento (highway)
p/d	-	partial data reply
PFC	-	prepared form card (prepared card)
PMB	-	Private Mail Bag
ppc	-	prepared card
Prov.	-	province, provincia
RP	-	return postage
Rpt.	-	report
SAE	-	self addressed envelope
SASE	-	self addressed stamped envelope
Str.	-	strasse (street)
Sr.	-	senor
Sra.	-	senora
Srta.	-	senorita
tent.	-	tentative report
v/s	-	verification signer



SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL QSL'ING

ALL ABOUT REPORTING AND QSL'ING SHORTWAVE BROADCAST, UTILITY, HAM, AM, FM, AND TV STATIONS. FORMS VS. LETTERS— TAILORING REPORTS— THE POST OFFICE— SHOTGUNNING— PEPPERING— FOLLOW-UPS— RETURN POSTAGE— PERIOD REPORTS— AND MUCH MORE! EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO INCREASE YOUR QSL RETURNS!

In 35 years of DX'ing the shortwave broadcast bands author GERRY L. DEXTER has verified over 90% of the more than 1,400 stations he has heard. All of the 225 countries in his log are verified! Dexter has put his years of QSL'ing experience into this one-of-a-kind book. It's virtually guaranteed to help you add to your own QSL collection.

Dexter writes the monthly "Listening Post" column for POPULAR COMMUNICATIONS *magazine and his articles on shortwave have appeared in such magazines as* Soldier of Fortune, The Progressive, Sport, Europe, Family Motor Coaching, *and many others. He is the author of the* World Broadcast Station Address Book *and* Clandestine Confidential.

Dexter's non-radio interests include current events and the music of STAN KENTON.

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